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ABSTRACT

Employment Plus is an intervention program offered by the Chesapeake Public School Division (Virginia) that targets high school students who are at risk of educational failure. The program is provided by the Department of Vocational Education and is offered in all high schools. Employment Plus offers an alternative to the traditional high school diploma for students who are 17 years of age and older and who are 2 or more years behind their peers. Students in Employment Plus receive preparation for the Tests of General Educational Development (GED), and they must sign an agreement to seek and maintain employment while in the process. Each high school usually serves an average of 15 students for the Employment Plus program for the school year. The enrollment for the 1997-98 school year in the 6 programs was 85 students. The evaluation for the 1997-98 school year examined the selection of students, the success rate of the program, costs, and overall satisfaction among students, program coordinators, employers, teachers, and principals. Interviews with approximately 65 students and 6 vocational counselors, and surveys completed by 5 principals and 19 employers and teachers provided evaluation data. In addition, the program model was compared with recommendations from the educational literature for serving at-risk secondary students. Evaluation findings show that the program is cost effective and that the model offers most of the strategies recommended for at-risk students. A large number of potential students who could benefit from the program are not considered for enrollment under current identification and selection processes. The cooperative work experience component is successful in some schools but not in others for reasons that usually center on difficulty in finding work. Approximately 50% of students in the program obtain the GED, but the number is higher for students who complete at least 24 weeks of the program. Principals and program coordinators were very satisfied with the program; and students, vocational counselors, employers, and teachers were satisfied. Recommendations are made to continue and improve the program. Three appendixes discuss contacts with other school divisions in Virginia to obtain comparative information and contain the program course catalog and selected student comments. (SLD)

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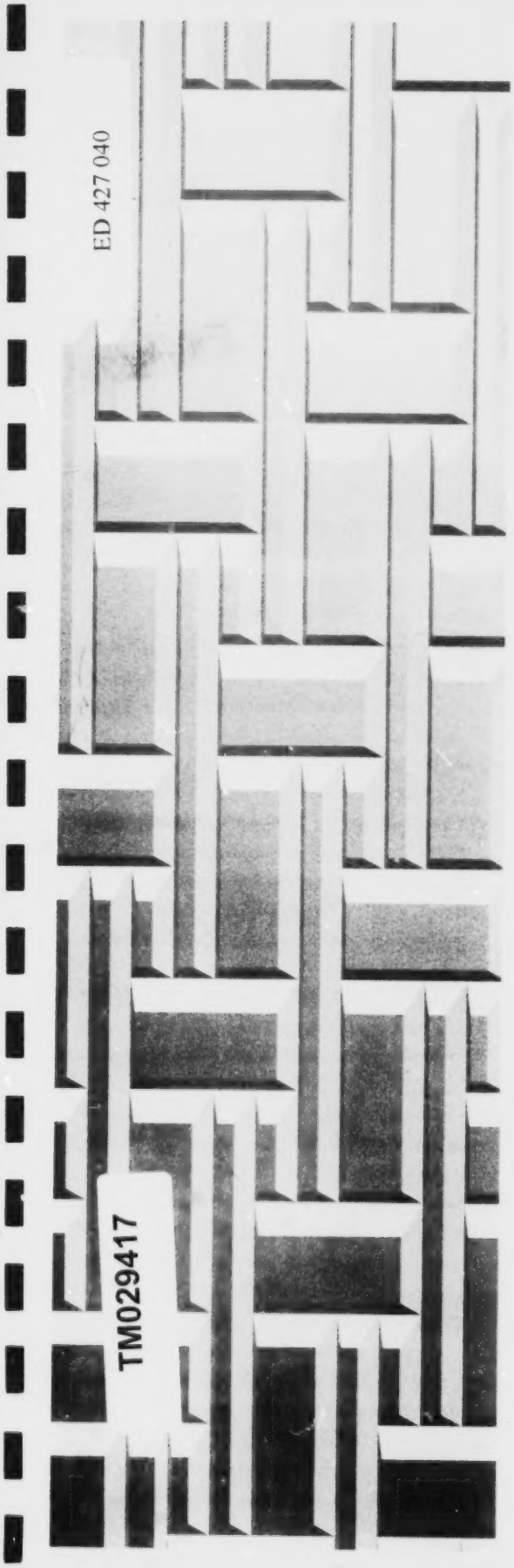

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CHESAPEAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EMPLOYMENT PLUS PROGRAM

EVALUATION

OFFICE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

JUNE 1998

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EVALUATION OF THE EMPLOYMENT PLUS PROGRAM
HOW TO READ THE EVALUATION REPORT

This report documents the results of the evaluation of the Employment Plus Program. The Table of Contents lists each section of the evaluation project and the related charts and appendices. The report is divided into the following sections:

- **Executive Summary of the Evaluation**
- **Overall Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations**
- **Evaluation Proposal**
- **Review of the Literature**
- **Group Interview/Individual Interviews with Employment Plus Coordinators**
- **Interview with Vocational Counselors**
- **Interviews with Employment Plus Students**
- **Survey of Principals**
- **Survey of Current Employers and Center for Science and Technology Teachers**
- **Analysis of Achievement Data**
- **Analysis of Information Regarding Applicant Pool, Students Pretested, and Students Enrolled**
- **Comparison of the Employment Plus Program Model with the Recommendations in Educational Literature for Programs Serving At-Risk Students**
- **Analysis of Cost Data**
- **Contacts with Other School Divisions**
- **Appendices**

An **Executive Summary** of the evaluation is provided at the front of the report. The summary is an overview of the evaluation.

The **Overall Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations** section includes the research questions, performance criteria for success, and final findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the evaluation. To obtain more detailed information regarding the findings, conclusions, and recommendations related to each data collection procedure, the reader should refer to the individual sections of the evaluation. Charts pertaining to each section appear immediately after the pages which refer to them.

The **Evaluation Proposal** defines the scope of the evaluation as agreed upon by team members and the administrators of the project and contains the signature of the program evaluation team leader and the administrators of the project.

The **Review of the Literature** provides information related to the research which guided the data collection activities of the evaluation.

The **Group Interview/Individual Interviews with Employment Plus Coordinators** section provides the results of the group interview with five coordinators and one-on-one interviews with the six coordinators and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Interview with Vocational Counselors** section provides the results of the group interview with five vocational counselors and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Interviews with Employment Plus Students** section provides the results of interviews with students from the 1997-98 program and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Survey of Principals** section provides the results of the formal survey of all high school principals and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Survey of Current Employers and Center for Science and Technology Teachers** section provides the results of the formal survey of employers and Center for Science and Technology teachers of 1997-98 Employment Plus students and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Analysis of Achievement Data** section provides the results of an analysis of data to determine the success rate of the Employment Plus program and related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Analysis of Information Regarding Applicant Pool, Students Pretested, and Students Enrolled** section provides the results of an analysis of information regarding students served in the Employment Plus program and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Comparison of the Employment Plus Program Model with the Recommendations in Educational Literature for Programs Serving At-Risk Students** section provides an analysis of the responses to the checklist of strategies by principals, coordinators, vocational counselors, and students and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Analysis of Cost Data** section presents information regarding the cost of serving a student in the Employment Plus program and the related findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The **Contacts with Other School Divisions** section provides the results of telephone contacts with personnel from eight school divisions in the state regarding programs for at-risk secondary students.

The **Appendices** section includes background documents related to the study.

It is hoped that the format of this report will assist the reader in understanding the evaluation of the Employment Plus Program.

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CHESAPEAKE
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The traditional schooling offered in our nation's public school system has for decades served many students well (Quinn 1991). One overriding characteristic of successful students is that they generally possess the self-esteem to interact positively with others and to experience academic achievement (Uroff and Greene 1991). The result is a sense of belonging and the ability to thrive in the typical secondary school setting.

Academic success, unfortunately, has eluded another segment of the secondary population of students in our public schools. The factors which have contributed to the low self-esteem and subsequent lack of academic achievement of these students are varied. They often include family problems (e.g., low socioeconomic status) and personal problems (e.g., teenage pregnancy) related to the pressures and problems of modern-day life that manifest themselves in the educational setting (DeNofa 1993). In many cases, the family and personal problems of these students have been exacerbated by school-related factors such as suspensions, grade retention, course failure, tracking, and ability grouping. The sense of belonging experienced by the mainstream of students is replaced with feelings of alienation and hostility toward the educational environment in the group of students labeled "at-risk youth" (Griffin 1993).

Secondary students who are considered "at-risk" for educational failure are students in middle and high school who require alternative educational interventions to ensure that they will graduate from high school (DeNofa 1993). Researchers estimate that up to thirty percent of students (approximately 500,000) do not finish high school each year, and the percentage is greater among minority groups in urban schools or students from very low socioeconomic backgrounds (Griffin 1993). One-third to one-half of all dropouts leave school prior to completing tenth grade, but the average age nationwide for dropping out is eighteen (Baldwin, Moffett, and Lane 1992). In Chesapeake, the typical student who drops out of school is sixteen or seventeen years old and in the ninth or tenth grade.

Ironically, the American system of equal educational opportunity for all probably has contributed to the poor performance of at-risk students (and their subsequent dropping out) by attempting to educate all students with essentially one pathway (Baldwin, Moffett, and Lane 1992). The bulk of research on the dropout problem for years focused largely on student behaviors that correlate with dropping out (e.g., poor academic performance, poor attendance). Running counter to this approach is more recent research devoted to (a) identifying practices in the schools which inadvertently aggravate the dropout problem (e.g., remediation, tracking, transitional classes in the early years) (Quinn 1991) and (b) searching for more effective programs to target the behaviors of at-risk students (Baker and Sansone 1990).

What is the Employment Plus program?

The Employment Plus program is one intervention offered by the Chesapeake school division which targets high school students who are at risk of educational failure (see Appendix 2, page 126). The program is provided by the Department of Vocational Education and began as a pilot in the 1992-93 school year at Oscar Smith High School; the program is offered now in all the Chesapeake high schools. Employment Plus is a state-approved program on the high school level which offers an alternative to the traditional diploma program for students who are seventeen years or older and two or more grade levels behind their age peers. Students typically enroll in Employment Plus for one year. Each high school usually serves an average of fifteen students for the school year. A program coordinator in each high school selects and enrolls students and provides instruction. Total current enrollment in the six programs in the school division is eighty-five students.

Students in Employment Plus receive preparation for the Tests of General Education Development (GED). Employment Plus is designed to serve students who score an established minimum on the GED Pretest and who successfully complete an interview with the Employment Plus Coordinator. Students also must sign an agreement to seek and maintain employment while in the program. Upon enrollment in Employment Plus, students enter Phase I of the Vocational Assessment process which identifies individual vocational interests.

Organization of Instruction

In Employment Plus, GED instruction is integrated with instruction in basic living skills, occupational/technical training, and pre-employability and employability skills (e.g., job interview skills, successful work attitudes and behaviors).

The program is designed for students to attend Employment Plus three hours each morning. During the three-hour block of time students receive GED preparation and pre-employability and employability skills training. The program is designed to provide a variety of instructional strategies, including computer-assisted instruction. Students who are involved in a cooperative work experience leave school after the three-hour instructional block. A small percentage of students attend the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology in the afternoon to receive specific occupational/technical training. The self-pacing and work experience component of the program provides the opportunity for flexibility in both the academic instruction and training for work.

The GED

The GED Certificate is nationally recognized as equivalent to the high school diploma. GED Testing programs are sponsored by all fifty state departments of education in conjunction with the American Council on Education. The intent of the GED Testing program is to provide a means of documenting that individuals have achieved secondary-level academic skills and knowledge. In Massachusetts, the Board of Education requires all high school seniors to take the GED examination before graduating. Mirroring the national average, approximately one in six of the diplomas issued in 1996 in Virginia were GED diplomas.

The GED examination is a set of five tests covering writing, science, mathematics, social studies, and literature and the arts. The five tests also measure reading comprehension, analytical and problem-solving ability, writing proficiency, and other skills. Passing the seven and one-half hour battery of tests demonstrates that an individual has acquired a level of learning in these core curriculum areas at least equal to that of the midrange of graduating high school seniors. To maintain this standard, the battery of tests are administered each year to a national sample of thousands of graduating high school seniors, thirty percent of whom fail the examination.

A 1993 survey of the largest employers in Virginia revealed that all accept the GED Certificate as the equivalent of a traditional high school diploma. Ninety-three percent of the colleges and universities in the nation accept GED graduates who meet the other qualifications for admission (e.g., SAT or ACT score requirements).

What does educational literature say about programs for at-risk secondary students (see Review of the Literature, page 36)?

This review of educational literature focuses on factors associated with the type of student enrolled in Employment Plus and the components desirable in interventions designed to keep these students in school.

1. Educational research overwhelmingly supports interventions for students who are at risk for not completing high school.
   - At-risk secondary students are students who require alternative interventions on the middle and high school levels to stay in school.
   - Approximately 30% of students do not finish high school each year.
   - The losses in terms of earning power for the individual and for society in general when students leave school prior to graduation are well documented: 50% of dropouts receive welfare payments or are unemployed; 60% of the prison population are dropouts.

2. At-risk students possess characteristics that are readily identifiable and predictable.
   - Examples of personal and family traits that characterize many at-risk students include the following:
     - Poor academic performance
     - Low self-esteem
     - Poor attendance
     - In-school delinquency problems
     - Feelings of lack of respect from peers and teachers
     - Two years behind age peers
     - Low socioeconomic status
     - Parents never completed high school
     - Parents are underemployed or unemployed
     - Single parent heads the household

- History of substance abuse
- Teen pregnancy
- Mental and physical health problems

3. Personal and family characteristics previously were thought to be the major predictors of educational failure. Current research places significant responsibility on the school itself as a contributor to the problem, including the following:
   - Unresponsiveness of the school to the needs of at-risk students
   - Failure to match interventions to individual students
   - An impersonal school environment, especially in large schools or schools with large student-to-teacher ratios
   - Lack of incentives to increase participation in extracurricular and cocurricular activities
   - Inappropriate interventions, although well intended, that actually exacerbate the at-risk status of students, including remediation programs, retention, tracking, and ability grouping
   - Emphasis on raising graduation standards with attendant increases in courses and examinations

4. Recommendations for interventions to serve at-risk students center around strategies related to curriculum, instructional methods, support services and resource personnel, and the school environment.

   Curriculum and instruction recommendations:
   - A sound academic curriculum that is suitable for serving all students.
   - A functional curriculum (i.e., links skills and competencies of the classroom to the outside world) that also addresses study skills, living skills, social skills, and preparation for the world of work.
   - Opportunities for cooperative work experiences
   - Alternate instructional strategies that emphasize problem-solving, computer-assisted learning, and teamwork
   - Staff development opportunities to assist teachers with alternate strategies; systematic evaluations to determine the effectiveness of strategies
   - Modeling by teachers of appropriate interpersonal skills that emphasize respect, trust, and caring
   - Alternative assessments such as individual learning contracts and incentives based on work-study performance
   - High expectations for academic performance; no remediation
   - Recognition that teachers are the greatest determinant of the success of a program

   Support services and resource personnel recommendations:
   - Guidance and counseling programs that are preventive in nature rather than crisis-oriented
   - Individual counseling to assure contact with at least one caring adult

- Case management systems on the building level
- Mentoring programs to involve the community
- Career education to establish the relevance of school to occupational goals
- Transitional support as students move from grade to grade and school to school
- Integration of school services with community service organizations and connections with business and industry to increase resources and funding
- Parents involved in the learning processes of their children; assistance to parents as needed

Recommendations related to the school environment

- A positive school climate in which students are esteemed for their unique strengths and abilities
- Small class sizes and when possible small schools
- Strong administrative commitment on the building level
- Flexible scheduling
- Alternative crediting programs
- Community service projects
- GED Preparation programs
- Acceleration programs which put at-risk students on track with age peers
- Alternative schools when funds are available

5. Local school divisions should begin early tracking of data on their student populations in order to identify characteristics and factors which place their students at risk. With this information, school divisions are in the best position to select effective programs.

How was the Employment Plus program evaluated?

The Employment Plus program was an evaluation project of the 1997-98 school year. The purpose of the evaluation was to examine the following:

- Employment Plus student population (applicant pool, students enrolled, and students who could benefit but were not served)
- Selection criteria and process
- Success rate of the program
- Cost of serving an Employment Plus student
- How the Employment Plus program model compares with recommendations from educational literature for serving at-risk secondary students
- Overall level of satisfaction with the program among current and former students, Employment Plus coordinators, vocational counselors, employers and Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology teachers, and high school principals
- Similar programs for at-risk secondary students in other school divisions

The components of the evaluation included the following:

- Group interview with Employment Plus coordinators

- Individual interviews with Employment Plus coordinators
- Group interview with vocational counselors
- Group interviews with Employment Plus students in the six high schools
- Survey of principals
- Survey of employers and Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology (CCST) teachers of current students
- Analysis of achievement data
- Analysis of data on applicant pool, students pretested, and students enrolled
- Comparison of program model with the recommendations from educational literature
- Analysis of cost data
- Contacts with eight other school divisions in the state

What are the major conclusions from the evaluation?

Program Characteristics

1. The Employment Plus program under vocational education is the only senior high school alternative to the regular program in the school division for students who are seventeen years of age or older and two years behind their age peers.

2. The Employment Plus program is cost effective.
   - The per pupil cost of serving a student in the Employment Plus program is 95% of the per pupil cost of serving students in all K-12 programs.

3. An imbalance in enrollments exists among the six high schools.
   - Deep Creek, Great Bridge, and Hickory high schools are under enrolled. Western Branch, Oscar Smith, and Indian River high schools are over enrolled.

4. All of the eight other school divisions contacted offer GED preparation as an alternative to the traditional diploma program for overage students. Most of the school divisions:
   - Do not require a cooperative work experience component.
   - Offer flexible scheduling (e.g., morning, afternoon, or evening programs) and flexible entry and exit, usually in one offsite location.

Identification and Selection Process

5. A large pool of potential students who could benefit from the Employment Plus program are not considered for enrollment under the current identification and selection procedures.
   - No gross screening measure designed to identify the entire potential applicant pool is used.
   - There is a reluctance to draw students from the regular program until there is clear evidence that a student is certain to be unsuccessful in the regular program.

6. Based on an analysis of a hypothetical applicant pool for the 1997-98 program, it appears

that a sufficient pool of students would be available to apply for entry into the program at second semester, especially at Deep Creek and Oscar Smith high schools.

- Deep Creek High had 20 students and Oscar Smith High had 18 students who were at least 17 years old, two years behind their age peers, and had two or more failures after the first grading period.

7. The process for identifying a pool of students who are seventeen years of age and two years behind their age peers that could benefit from the program is informal and inconsistent among schools.

8. The initial Employment Plus selection criteria (i.e., at least seventeen years of age and two years behind age peers with a minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest) are standard among schools.

- Criteria are considered appropriate by principals, coordinators, and vocational counselors.

9. The following is a profile of applicants (students who took the GED Pretest) for the 1997-98 Employment Plus program:

- At least 17 years of age (98%)
- Two years behind age peers (95%)
- Ninth and tenth graders (90%)
- A GED Pretest score that is at least the minimum passing score (225) to obtain the GED (32% of all applicants); of those applicants not enrolling, 24% had at least the minimum passing score (225) to obtain the GED.

10. Final eligibility requirements for enrollment in Employment Plus (i.e., student interview, parental involvement, cooperative work experience) vary among schools.

11. The cooperative work experience criterion is effective in some schools but a hindrance to participation in others.

- Some students have difficulty finding employment due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., transportation problems) or do not desire the type of work typically available (e.g., fast food).
- Occupational/technical training at the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology currently is not an option for most Employment Plus students.

12. In most schools, the Employment Plus coordinator determines the final eligibility upon approval of the principal.

- A team approach to determining eligibility is used in only a few schools.

13. Students enrolled in the 1997-98 Employment Plus program fit the expected student profile (i.e., at least seventeen years, two years behind age peers, a minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest).

14. Currently the entry and exit policy (i.e., entry by November 30 and exit at the end of the year) limits the ability of the program to serve all potential students. An entry point at second semester with a continuing summer program would allow the program to serve students who are identified at mid-year and currently must postpone enrollment until the following year.

Program Success

15. Approximately 50% of all students obtain the GED; however, the number of students passing the GED exam is higher for students who attend the program at least 24 weeks (average 73% of students for the two-year period studied).

16. A significant percentage of the Employment Plus students studied (one-third) scored the minimum required for passing the GED exam *before* entering Employment Plus.

17. Approximately 50% of students complete the cooperative work experience; however, the number of students successfully completing the cooperative work experience increases for students who attend the program for 24 weeks or more (average 71% of students for the two-year period studied).

18. The rate of attrition and truancy in the program is high in spite of overall program success.
    - Approximately one-third of the students who initially enrolled in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 Employment Plus programs attended fewer than 24 weeks. (Late enrollments also are included in this number.)
    - Some Employment Plus students find it difficult to conform to the attendance policy of the regular program.

19. The success of the cooperative work experience component varies among schools.
    - The school division budgets limited funds to employ students. The three high schools which benefit from these funds appear to experience greater success with the cooperative work experience component.
    - The employment component is not valued by students in some schools (possibly due to the type of available jobs) and affects participation.
    - Lack of skills for the workplace, transportation, and other extenuating circumstances hinder the employment of some students.

20. The success of the arrangement between the Employment Plus program and the Center for Science and Technology to provide occupational/technical training to students has been minimal.
    - Lack of success has been due largely to scheduling difficulties once the school year begins and issues related to attendance and behavior of students at CCST.

21. Based on information from 1995-96 Employment Plus students who could be reached by telephone, the success rate of the program is high in terms of the number of students still

employed or continuing their education (14 of 16 students) two years after completion of the program.

22. Principals and coordinators are very satisfied with the Employment Plus program. Students, vocational counselors, and employers/CCST teachers are satisfied with the program.
    - Most students interviewed said they would not have completed high school without the Employment Plus program.

The Program Model

23. The Employment Plus program model offers to some extent 95% of the strategies recommended from educational literature.
    - The program does not have a volunteer mentoring component which is a valuable missing component.

24. Evaluation results indicate that five of the strategies recommended from educational literature need to be strengthened:
    - Computer-assisted instruction
    - Supportive relationship between the guidance department and the Employment Plus student
    - Integration of Employment Plus services with the services of the community
    - Involvement of Employment Plus students in community service projects
    - Case management component pertaining to the court system

25. Groups interviewed and surveyed believe the program would be enhanced by the following:
    - Standardization and clarification of divisionwide rules governing participation in the graduation ceremony of the home school
    - Expanded opportunities for Employment Plus students to be included more fully in the home school community (e.g., driver education, school-related activities)
    - Standardization and clarification of divisionwide attendance policy and the disciplinary due process rights of students

What are the major recommendations for the Employment Plus program?

1. Retain the Employment Plus program as an alternative to the regular high school program.

2. Promote the Employment Plus program as part of the core program of the high school.
   - Communicate the legitimacy of the Employment Plus program to administrators, faculty, students, and parents as an option for overage students who are not succeeding in the regular program.
   - Provide greater opportunities for students to participate in school-related activities (e.g., assemblies).
   - Clarify guidelines of the Employment Plus program in each school and apply the rules consistently.

3. Formalize the current process for identifying students, and modify the current selection process (i.e., coordinators determine final eligibility) to include a team approach.
   - To serve more students who could benefit from the program, the following identification and selection process is recommended:
     - A schoolwide "safety net" team should be established to assess potential candidates and determine final eligibility. The team should be chaired by a regular guidance counselor and comprised of the vocational counselor, an administrator, and the Employment Plus coordinator. Members of this team could make recommendations for other programs as well (e.g., Education for Employment).
     - After each nine-week period, the team should use the student data management system to identify students who are at least seventeen years of age, two years behind their age peers, and failing two or more subjects.
     - Once an initial pool of students is identified, the team should study student profiles and consider recommendations from other school personnel as well as self-referrals to identify a group of students (who could benefit most from the program) to take the GED Pretest.
     - A standard means of informing potential students and parents about the Employment Plus program should be established by the team.

4. Retain the eligibility requirements in all Employment Plus programs including the following current practices:
   - Obtaining an established minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest
   - Completing an interview with the Employment Plus coordinator to determine the motivation to participate fully in GED preparation and cooperative work experience or other vocational training
   - Obtaining parental support for the student while in the program to the extent possible

5. Explore the following strategies to assist students from all the senior high schools with successfully completing the cooperative work experience component of the program:

- Increasing job placement opportunities within the school division
- Under unique circumstances, offering students the opportunity to enroll in regular vocational courses that provide specific job training (e.g., catering, computer training) as an alternative to the cooperative work experience
- Encouraging coordinators to assume a more active role in helping students find employment or business internships (coordinators have two coordinating bells under the six-bell schedule and an extended contract in the summer)
- Allowing Employment Plus students to take driver education to assist in resolving transportation problems

6. Reexamine the arrangement with the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology for providing occupational/technical training to Employment Plus students.
   - Allow students to enter CCST programs when they enter Employment Plus.
   - Develop a "work adjustment" program (e.g., safety rules) to prepare students who enter CCST vocational programs late.
   - Address attendance and behavior issues which hinder the success of students in the program.
   - Increase the contact between Employment Plus coordinators and the staff of the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology.

7. Develop a manual of guidelines to be used by all coordinators and the "safety net" screening team. The guidelines should be clear, consistent among the six high schools, and include the following:
   - Responsibilities of Employment Plus coordinators
   - Role of the vocational counselor, including the importance of providing ongoing support to Employment Plus students
   - Identification and selection process
   - Entry/exit policy
   - Guidelines governing student employment during the program
   - Policy regarding student absences and tardies with reasonable flexibility
   - Rules governing participation in school activities and graduation ceremonies
   - Student discipline, including the disciplinary due process rights of students

8. Continue to offer the strategies which educational literature recommends for programs that serve at-risk youth in the Employment Plus program. With regard to strategies which groups indicated were not available, needed to be strengthened, or of which they had no knowledge, the following is recommended:
   - Integrate computer skills more fully into both the GED preparation and employment skills components of the curriculum (e.g., teach students to use word processing software to prepare resumes). Establish a rotation schedule which allows students to use computers on a daily basis.
   - Formalize a volunteer mentoring component for each student in the Employment Plus program.

- Clarify the importance of the role of the vocational counselor and other members of the guidance department in providing ongoing support to Employment Plus students in order to strengthen the link between the student and the school.
- Provide information regarding community services (e.g., social services) to Employment Plus students.
- Increase parental involvement opportunities (e.g., provide periodic information on the student's progress toward obtaining the GED at all schools)
- For students not employed, explore the possibility of providing structured volunteer community service internships (e.g., hospital volunteer, YMCA, and other age-appropriate agencies) as a transition to cooperative work experience.
- Clarify entry and exit policies for the program.

9. Allow students to enter Employment Plus at the beginning of second semester with the option to continue in the summer or to re-enroll the following fall:
   - To accommodate students identified at mid-year who currently must postpone enrollment until the following school year.
   - To increase enrollments at schools that are traditionally under enrolled.

10. Increase the initial enrollment in the program in each school to compensate for the high rate of attrition and to maximize the efficiency of the program (e.g., to maintain 15 students, enroll 17).

11. Address the imbalance of enrollments in the Employment Plus program in the six high schools in order to increase efficiency. As soon as feasible, shift the entire Employment Plus Program to the Center for Science and Technology where (a) more students could be served, (b) a better balance in class size could be achieved, (c) vocational programs are accessible, (d) transportation is available, (e) driver education is feasible, and (f) ties to the home school could be maintained.

12. Plan to offer a separate, non-vocational alternative GED preparation program for overage students on a semester format at the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology to be approved by the Virginia Department of Education:
   - To address the fact that one-third of the students enrolled in Employment Plus have obtained a passing GED score on the pretest before entering the program.
   - To address the fact that presently students in the regular program who may not desire a yearlong alternative program must formally drop out of school to enroll in an adult GED preparation program.
   - To retain all GED preparation programs for high school students as part of the overall senior high school program.

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OVERALL FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERALL FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the overall findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the following information sources: Group interview with Employment Plus coordinators; individual interviews with Employment Plus coordinators; group interview with vocational counselors; group interviews with students; survey of principals; survey of employers and Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology (CCST) teachers of current students; analysis of achievement data; analysis of data on the applicant pool, students pretested, and students enrolled; comparison of program model with the recommendations from educational literature; cost information; and contacts with other school divisions.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS: See Evaluation Proposal, page 31.

OVERALL FINDINGS: See Chart 1, page 16.

Who is served in the Employment Plus program?

1. With regard to **students enrolled**:
   - Students generally are enrolled on a first-come, first-served basis, entering the program before a deadline of November 30 and exiting upon completion of the GED examination the following spring (unless they drop out of the program).
   - An analysis of information regarding students enrolled in the 1997-98 Employment Plus program revealed that students fit the expected profile (i.e., at least seventeen years, two years behind age peers, a minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest):
     - One hundred percent of the 89 students who enrolled were 17 years of age or older.
     - Ninety-nine percent of the students (88) who enrolled were two years behind their age peers.
     - Ninety-six percent of the students (85) scored 190 or higher on the GED Pretest.
       - Thirty-seven percent of students (33) had achieved a GED Pretest score which was at least the minimum passing score (225) to obtain the GED before enrolling.
   - All groups interviewed generally indicated that students enrolled fit the expected profile.
   - The Employment Plus programs at three schools are under enrolled (i.e., Deep Creek, Great Bridge, and Hickory high schools) and over enrolled at three schools (i.e., Western Branch, Oscar Smith, and Indian River high schools).
     - Some members of groups interviewed and surveyed representing schools with low enrollments suggested more flexibility with regard to the November cutoff date for enrolling students.
     - Members of these groups also suggested a more flexible entry and exit policy to assist in filling available slots, serving students whose GED Pretest scores

CHART 1
SUMMARY OF OVERALL FINDINGS

DATA SOURCE	Size of overall applicant pool? Pool of pretested students?*	Characteristics of students in applicant pool? (97-98)	Standard selection criteria and process?	Students enrolled fit the expected profile? (97-98)	Students who could benefit but were not served?	Successful program? (# students passing GED exam)	Successful program? (# students completing coop work exper)	Successful program? (# students employed/ higher ed 2 years later) (95-96)	Cost of program?	Program model compares favorably with educational research?	Satisfaction with program among all groups?
Group Interview with Emp Plus Coords	Limited # of students pretested	NA	Initial Criteria: Yes Final Criteria: No Process: No	Yes	Unsure	Yes	Some students not employed	NA	NA	Yes	Yes Most very satisfied
Individual Interviews with Emp Plus Coords	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Some students not employed	NA	NA	Yes	Yes Most very satisfied
Group Interview with Vocational Counselors	Limited # of students pretested	NA	Initial Criteria: Yes Final Criteria: No Process: No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some students not employed	NA	NA	Yes	Yes Most satisfied
Group Interviews with Students	Limited # of students pretested	NA	Initial Criteria: Yes Final Criteria: No Process: No	Yes	Yes	NA	Some students not employed	NA	NA	Yes	Yes Most satisfied
Survey of Principals	Limited # of students pretested	NA	Initial Criteria: Yes Final Criteria: No Process: NA	Yes	Yes	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes 100% very satisfied
Survey of Employers/Tchrs	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes 68% satisfied or very satisfied
Achievement Data (95-96; 96-97)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes** 81% (95-96) 65% (96-97)	Yes** 71% (95-96) 63% (96-97)	Yes 88%	NA	NA	NA
Analysis of Data on Applicant Pool, Students Pretested, Students Enrolled (97-98)	Hypothetical pool of 781 students in overall applicant pool 160 (20%) students pretested	98% 17 years 90% 9th/10th graders 95% 2yrs behind 32% with GED minimum on pretest	Initial Criteria: Yes Final Criteria: No Process: NA	Yes 100% 17 years 99% 2 yrs behind 96% 190+ on pretest 37% GED minimum on pretest	Yes	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Program Model Comparison	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	NA
Cost Information	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Reasonable compared to all progs	NA	NA
Contacts with Other School Divisions	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No achievement data available	Coop work not required in most divs	No achievement data available	NA	NA	Yes

and classroom performance indicate the need for a short-term program, and serving students who are identified at mid-year.

- All of the eight other school divisions contacted offer alternative GED preparation programs with more than one entry and exit point for overage students.
  - All of the other school divisions contacted offer GED preparation at an offsite location that allows greater flexibility in scheduling GED preparation (e.g., morning, afternoon, and/or evening programs).

2. With regard to the **size of the applicant pool**:
   - The majority of principals surveyed indicated that the initial pool of applicants for the 1997-98 Employment Plus program included a limited number of students who fit the expected profile of being seventeen years old and two years behind.
     - Principals indicated the initial applicant pool was appropriate being neither too broad nor too narrow.
   - Employment Plus coordinators, vocational counselors, and students indicated in group interviews that the applicant pool included a limited number of students who fit the expected profile.
   - A list of students in the school division who were at least 17 year of age, two years behind their age peers, and had one or more failures after the first grading period of the 1997-98 school year revealed that 781 students made up a potential applicant pool for the Employment Plus program. A total of 54 students from the potential applicant pool had two or more failures after the first grading period.
     - A total of 160 students, or 20% of the hypothetical applicant pool of 781 students, were pretested in the six high schools for the 1997-98 Employment Plus program.
   - Students not served by the Employment Plus program either continue in the regular program or drop out of school.

3. With regard to **characteristics of students in the applicant pool**:
   - One hundred and sixty students were pretested for the 1997-98 Employment Plus program,
     - Ninety-eight percent (157 students) were at least 17 years of age.
     - Grade levels of students pretested were as follows:
       - Thirty percent (47 students) were ninth graders.
       - Sixty percent (95 students) were tenth graders.
       - Ten percent (16 students) were eleventh graders.
       - One percent (2 students) were twelfth graders.
     - Ninety-five percent of pretested students (152) were at least two years behind their age peers.
   - An analysis of GED Pretest scores of the 160 students revealed the following:
     - Thirty-two percent (50 students) had achieved a GED Pretest score which

was at least the minimum passing score (225) to obtain the GED before enrolling in the program.

- Nine percent (15 students) scored between 215 and 224.
- Thirty-four percent (54 students) scored between 190 and 214.
- Twenty-five percent (41 students) scored below 190.

4. With regard to the **selection criteria**:
   - An analysis of information regarding students enrolled in the 1997-98 Employment Plus program revealed that 98% of the students were at least 17 years of age, 95% were two years behind their age peers, and 96% had a score of 190 or better on the GED Pretest.
   - All principals surveyed responded that the selection criteria used to determine final eligibility of a student are a minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest and the potential for cooperative work experience based on an interview with program staff.
     - Principals indicated that they consider the criteria to be appropriate
   - Employment Plus coordinators and vocational counselors indicated that the initial selection criteria of being at least seventeen years and two years behind grade peers is standard among schools.
   - Responses of Employment Plus coordinators and vocational counselors indicated, however, that final selection criteria vary from simply passing the GED Pretest to also successfully completing an interview with the coordinator, agreeing to a cooperative work experience, and providing evidence of strong parental support.
   - Employment Plus coordinators and vocational counselors indicated that in some schools the cooperative work experience criterion is a hindrance to participation due to the following:
     - Students have extenuating circumstances (e.g., lack of transportation, probation status, lack of pre-employability skills) that hinder employment.
     - A small applicant pool in some schools further limits the number of students who can fulfil this criterion.
     - Jobs available in the service economy (e.g., fast food) are not valued.
     - Jobs available in the school division are limited to students from three schools.
     - Barriers to participation in occupational/technical training at the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology exist (e.g., no entry for students who enroll in Employment Plus after the first two weeks of school, attendance and behavior problems).
   - Only two of the other eight school divisions contacted require cooperative work experience in their alternative GED preparation programs.

5. With regard to the **identification and selection process**:
   - Employment Plus coordinators, vocational counselors, and students described variations from school to school in the process for identifying the initial pool of

students from those who are at least seventeen years of age and two years behind their age peers.

- Methods of identification included self-referrals, referrals by administrators, the guidance department, administrators, and teachers. Employment Plus Coordinators also conduct time-consuming searches through student failure lists.
- Coordinators and vocational counselors generally agreed that the identification process could be improved.

- The majority of principals, coordinators and vocational counselors indicated that the Employment Plus coordinator determines the final eligibility of students for the program (in some schools a committee determines eligibility) and that this component of the process is appropriate.
  - Additional responsibilities of coordinators include recruiting, screening, teaching, coordinating cooperative work experiences, and providing progress reports of students as well as coordinating services with community agencies as needed.
    - Employment Plus coordinators are assigned the same responsibilities; methods of carrying out the responsibilities vary at all schools.

6. With regard to whether **other students who could benefit** were not served:
   - A high percentage of surveyed principals responded that additional students could benefit from the program each year.
   - Vocational counselors and students indicated that in most schools more students could benefit from the program with better methods of outreach. Employment Plus coordinators were unsure.
   - As mentioned above, only 20% of a potential applicant pool of 781 students were pretested in the six high schools for the 1997-98 Employment Plus program.

<u>What is the success rate of the Employment Plus program</u>?

1. With regard to number of students who obtained a GED Certificate:
   - Fifty-six percent of the 80 students who were enrolled in the 1995-96 program obtained the GED Certificate.
   - Eighty-one percent of the 54 students who were in the 1995-96 program at least 24 weeks and took the GED examination obtained the GED Certificate.
   - Forty-six percent of the 81 students who were enrolled in the 1996-97 program obtained the GED Certificate.
   - Sixty-five percent of the 52 students who were in the 1996-97 program at least 24 weeks and took the GED examination obtained the GED Certificate
   - Approximately one-third of the students who initially enrolled in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 Employment Plus programs attended fewer than 24 weeks.

- Only eight percent of the 25 students who were in the 1995-96 program fewer than 24 weeks and took the GED examination obtained the GED Certificate.
- Only thirteen percent of the 24 students who were in the 1996-97 program fewer than 24 weeks and took the GED examination obtained the GED Certificate.
- Approximately one-third of the total number of students enrolled in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 Employment Plus programs had GED Pretest scores which were at least the minimum passing score (225) to obtain the GED before enrolling.

2. With regard to number of students who successfully completed a cooperative work experience or an occupational/technical training program:
   - Forty-nine percent of the 80 students who were enrolled in the 1995-96 program successfully completed the cooperative work experience or occupational/technical training.
   - Approximately three-quarters of the 55 students who attended the 1995-96 program at least 24 weeks successfully completed the cooperative work experience or occupational/technical training.
   - Forty-eight percent of the 81 students who enrolled in the 1996-97 program successfully completed the cooperative work experience or occupational/technical training.
   - Approximately two-thirds of the 57 students who attended the 1996-97 program at least 24 weeks successfully completed the cooperative work experience or occupational/technical training.
   - None of the 25 students who attended the 1995-96 program fewer than 24 weeks successfully completed the cooperative work experience.
   - Only three of the 24 students who attended the 1996-97 program fewer than 24 weeks successfully completed the cooperative work experience.

3. With regard to number of students still employed or continuing their education two years after completion of the program:
   - Of the 16 students from the 1995-96 Employment Plus program who could be reached by telephone, 14 students (88%) are working and/or continuing their education.
   - In addition, current Employment Plus students interviewed indicated that they have future plans that include further training (e.g., trade school, community college), employment, or military service.

How much does the program cost?

1. The per pupil cost of the 1997-98 Employment Plus program was 95% of the per pupil cost of serving students in all K-12 programs.
   - The budgeted per pupil cost for all 1997-98 K-12 programs was $5,848.
   - The estimated per pupil cost for the 1997-98 Employment Plus program was $5,561.

- The per pupil cost of serving students in the Employment Plus program was $287 less than the per pupil cost of serving students in all K-12 programs.

How does the program model compare with the recommendations of educational research on programs for at-risk students?

1. It appears that the Employment Plus program offers to some extent all but one of the strategies recommended in educational literature. The program does not offer a volunteer mentoring component.
   - The majority of principals, coordinators, and student agreed that this strategy is not used in the program. Half of the vocational counselors agreed, and the remainder said they have no knowledge regarding this component.

2. Responses of the four groups indicated that five strategies on the checklist need to be strengthened:
   - Computer-assisted instruction
     - Only 64% of students indicated this strategy is used.
   - Relationship with the guidance department
     - Only 49% of students indicated the linkage is strong.
     - Only 59% of students said the program provides a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult staff member.
     - A significant percentage of vocational counselors indicated they have no knowledge as to whether the following strategies are provided: (a) Mentoring, (b) Integration of services with community services, (c) Valuing unique strengths and weaknesses, (d) Community service projects.
   - Integration of Employment Plus services with the services of the community
   - Involvement of students in community services projects
   - Case management component pertaining to the court system
     - The majority of students indicated they have no knowledge of this strategy.

What is the overall level of satisfaction with the program?

1. Groups interviewed and/or surveyed expressed the following levels of satisfaction with the Employment Plus program:
   - Employment Plus coordinators, vocational counselors, and students interviewed expressed satisfaction with the program.
     - Students commented that the Employment Plus program has kept them in school by offering a clear, achievable, and relevant goal (i.e., obtaining the GED Certificate) and identification with one teacher who can provide individual assistance.
   - All principals surveyed responded that they are very satisfied with the program.

- Sixty-eight percent of employers and Center for Science and Technology teachers surveyed responded that they are very satisfied or satisfied with the program.
  - Approximately one-third of employers responded that they are not satisfied with the job performance of students. This is the first year of participation in the Employment Plus program for the majority of employers, and most employ or teach only one student from the program.
  - Employers and teachers responded that there is regular contact with Employment Plus coordinators and that the contact is sufficient.
- All of the 16 students from the 1995-96 program who could be reached by telephone expressed satisfaction with the program.

Groups interviewed and surveyed also mentioned the following aspects of the program that could be improved:

- Rules governing participation of Employment Plus students in the graduation ceremony are unclear and vary among the six schools from simply passing the GED exam to full participation (i.e., entry at the beginning of the year, good attendance, and participation in the cooperative work experience).
- Some students feel a sense of alienation from the home school because they are not allowed to participate in school activities (e.g., assemblies). Students cited in particular the need for driver education and a desire to participate in sports.
- Employment Plus students find it difficult to conform to the attendance policy of the regular program, and the rate of attrition and truancy in the program is high.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS:

The following conclusions are based on an analysis of the results from all of the data collection activities of the evaluation.

Who is served in the Employment Plus program?

Size of the applicant pool:

1. A large number of regular education students in the school division potentially could benefit (i.e., meet the initial criteria of being at least seventeen years of age and two years behind their age peers and failing one or more classes) from the Employment Plus program. Only a small percentage of students from the potential applicant pool take the GED Pretest to apply to the program.

2. It appears that a sufficient pool of students would be available to apply for entry into the Employment Plus program at second semester, especially at Deep Creek and Oscar Smith high schools.

3. The Employment Plus program is the only senior high school alternative to the regular program in the school division for students who are seventeen years of age or older and two years behind their age peers.

4. All of the eight other school divisions contacted offer GED preparation as an alternative to the traditional diploma program for overage students.

5. The following is a profile of students who took the GED Pretest to apply for the 1997-98 Employment Plus program:
   - Nearly all of the pretested students were at least 17 years of age (98%) and two years behind their age peers (95%).
   - A high percentage of pretested students (90%) were ninth and tenth graders.
   - A significant minority of pretested students (nearly 32%) achieved a GED Pretest score which was at least the minimum passing score (225) to obtain the GED.

Selection Criteria:

6. The initial Employment Plus selection criteria (i.e., at least seventeen years of age and two years behind age peers with a minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest) are standard among schools and are considered appropriate by principals, coordinators, and vocational counselors.

7. Additional requirements for enrollment in Employment Plus (i.e., student interview, parental involvement, cooperative work experience) vary among schools .

8. The cooperative work experience criterion is effective in some schools but a hindrance to participation in others.

   - Some students have difficulty finding employment due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., transportation problems) or do not desire the type of work typically available (e.g., fast food).
   - Occupational/technical training at the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology currently is not an option for most Employment Plus students.
   - Most of the eight other school divisions contacted do not require a cooperative work experience component.

Identification and selection process:

9. The process for identifying a pool of students who are seventeen years of age and two years behind their age peers that could benefit from the program is informal and inconsistent among schools.

10. The Employment Plus coordinator usually determines the final eligibility of students for

the program with approval by the principal. A team approach to determining student eligibility is used in only a few schools.

Students enrolled:

11. Based on an analysis of characteristics of students enrolled in the 1997-98 Employment Plus program and responses of principals, coordinators, and vocational counselors, students fit the expected profile (i.e., at least seventeen years, two years behind age peers, a minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest).

12. An imbalance in enrollments exists among the six high schools.
    - Deep Creek, Great Bridge, and Hickory high schools are under enrolled. Western Branch, Oscar Smith, and Indian River high schools are over enrolled.

13. Allowing students to enter the program at the beginning of second semester with an option to continue in the summer or to re-enroll the following fall would enable the Employment Plus program to serve students who are identified at mid-year and currently must postpone enrollment until the following school year.
    - Most of the eight other school divisions contacted offer flexible scheduling (e.g., morning, afternoon, or evening programs) and flexible entry and exit, usually in one offsite location.

Students who could benefit but were not served:

14. Based on the responses of all groups and a comparison of the results of a gross screening measure with the number of students pretested, it appears that not all students who could benefit from the Employment Plus program are considered for enrollment.
    - No gross screening measure designed to identify the entire potential applicant pool is used.
    - There is a reluctance to draw students from the regular program until there is clear evidence that a student is certain to be unsuccessful in the regular program.

What is the success rate of the Employment Plus program?

Number of students who obtained a GED Certificate:

1. Approximately 50% of all students obtain the GED; however, the number of students passing the GED exam is higher for students who attend the Employment Plus program for at least 24 weeks (average 73% of students for the two-year period studied).
2. Approximately one-third of the total number of students enrolled in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 Employment Plus programs had GED Pretest scores which were at least the minimum passing score to obtain the GED before enrolling.

3. In spite of overall program success, the rate of attrition and truancy of students who enroll in the program is high.
   - Approximately one-third of the students who initially enrolled in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 Employment Plus programs attended fewer than 24 weeks. (Late enrollments also are included in this number.)

Number of students who successfully completed a cooperative work experience or an occupational/technical training program:

4. Approximately 50% of students complete the cooperative work experience; however, the number of students successfully completing the cooperative work experience increases for students who attend the program for 24 weeks or more (average 71% of students for the two-year period studied).

5. The success of the cooperative work experience component varies among schools.
   - The school division budgets limited funds to employ students. The three high schools which benefit from these funds appear to experience greater success with the cooperative work experience component.
   - The employment component is not valued by students in some schools (possibly due to the type of available jobs) and affects participation.
   - Lack of skills for the workplace, transportation, and other extenuating circumstances hinder the employment of some students.

6. The success of the arrangement between the Employment Plus program and the Center for Science and Technology to provide occupational/technical training to students has been minimal due largely to scheduling difficulties once the school year begins and issues related to attendance and behavior of students.

Number of students still employed or in higher education two years after completion of the program:

7. Based on information from 1995-96 Employment Plus students who could be reached by telephone, the success rate of the program is high in terms of the number of students still employed or continuing their education two years after completion of the program.

How much does the program cost?

1. The cost of serving a student in the Employment Plus program is reasonable when compared with the cost of serving students in all K-12 programs.
   - The per pupil cost of serving a student in the Employment Plus program is 95% of the per pupil cost of serving students in all K-12 programs.

How does the program model compare with the recommendations of educational research on programs for at-risk students?

1. The Employment Plus program model offers to some extent 95% of the strategies on the checklist of recommendations from educational literature. The program does not have a volunteer mentoring component which is a valuable missing component.

2. Evaluation results indicate that five of the strategies recommended from educational literature need to be strengthened:
   - Computer-assisted instruction
   - Supportive relationship between the guidance department and the Employment Plus student
   - Integration of Employment Plus services with the services of the community
   - Involvement of Employment Plus students in community service projects
   - Case management component pertaining to the court system

What is the overall level of satisfaction with the program?

1. Principals and coordinators are very satisfied with the Employment Plus program. Students, vocational counselors, and employers/CCST teachers are satisfied with the program.
   - Most students interviewed said they would not have completed high school without the Employment Plus program.

2. Groups interviewed and surveyed suggested the following additional modifications to improve the program:
   - Standardization and clarification of divisionwide rules governing participation in the graduation ceremony of the home school
   - Expanded opportunities for Employment Plus students to be included in the home school community (e.g., driver education, school-related activities)
   - Standardization and clarification of divisionwide attendance policy and disciplinary due process rights of students in the program

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations are based on a comparison of the findings and conclusions of the evaluation with the performance criteria for success established in the Program Evaluation Proposal.

1. Retain the Employment Plus program as an alternative to the regular high school program.

2. Promote the Employment Plus program as part of the core program of the high school.

- Communicate the legitimacy of the Employment Plus program to administrators, faculty, students, and parents as an option for overage students who are not succeeding in the regular program.
- Provide greater opportunities for students to participate in school-related activities (e.g., assemblies).
- Clarify guidelines of the Employment Plus program in each school and apply the rules consistently.

3. Formalize the current process for identifying students, and modify the current selection process (i.e., coordinators determine final eligibility) to include a team approach.
   - To serve more students who could benefit from the program, the following identification and selection process is recommended:
     - A schoolwide "safety net" team should be established to assess potential candidates and determine final eligibility. The team should be chaired by a regular guidance counselor and comprised of the vocational counselor, an administrator, and the Employment Plus coordinator. Members of this team could make recommendations for other programs as well (e.g., Education for Employment).
     - After each nine-week period, the team should use the student data management system to identify students who are at least seventeen years of age, two years behind their age peers, and failing two or more subjects.
     - Once an initial pool of students is identified, the team should study student profiles and consider recommendations from other school personnel as well as self-referrals to identify a group of students (who could benefit most from the program) to take the GED Pretest.
     - A standard means of informing potential students and parents about the Employment Plus program should be established by the team.

4. Retain the eligibility requirements in all Employment Plus programs including the following current practices:
   - Obtaining an established minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest
   - Completing an interview with the Employment Plus coordinator to determine the motivation to participate fully in GED preparation and cooperative work experience or other vocational training
   - Obtaining parental support for the student while in the program to the extent possible

5. Explore the following strategies to assist students from all the senior high schools with successfully completing the cooperative work experience component of the program:
   - Increasing job placement opportunities within the school division
   - Under unique circumstances, offering students the opportunity to enroll in regular vocational courses that provide specific job training (e.g., catering, computer training) as an alternative to the cooperative work experience

- Encouraging coordinators to assume a more active role in helping students find employment or business internships (coordinators have two coordinating bells under the six-bell schedule and an extended contract in the summer)
- Allowing Employment Plus students to take driver education to assist in resolving transportation problems

6. Reexamine the arrangement with the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology for providing occupational/technical training to Employment Plus students.
   - Allow students to enter CCST programs when they enter Employment Plus.
   - Develop a "work adjustment" program (e.g., safety rules) to prepare students who enter CCST vocational programs late.
   - Address attendance and behavior issues which hinder the success of students in the program.
   - Increase the contact between Employment Plus coordinators and the staff of the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology.

7. Develop a manual of guidelines to be used by all coordinators and the "safety net" screening team. The guidelines should be clear, consistent among the six high schools, and include the following:
   - Responsibilities of Employment Plus coordinators
   - Role of the vocational counselor, including the importance of providing ongoing support to Employment Plus students
   - Identification and selection process
   - Entry/exit policy
   - Guidelines governing student employment during the program
   - Policy regarding student absences and tardies with reasonable flexibility
   - Rules governing participation in school activities and graduation ceremonies
   - Student discipline, including the disciplinary due process rights of students

8. Continue to offer the strategies which educational literature recommends for programs that serve at-risk youth in the Employment Plus program. With regard to strategies which groups indicated were not available, needed to be strengthened, or of which they had no knowledge, the following is recommended:
   - Integrate computer skills more fully into both the GED preparation and employment skills components of the curriculum (e.g., teach students to use word processing software to prepare resumes). Establish a rotation schedule which allows students to use computers on a daily basis.
   - Formalize a volunteer mentoring component for each student in the Employment Plus program.
   - Clarify the importance of the role of the vocational counselor and other members of the guidance department in providing ongoing support to Employment Plus students in order to strengthen the link between the student and the school.

- Provide information regarding community services (e.g., social services) to Employment Plus students.
- Increase parental involvement opportunities (e.g., provide periodic information on the student's progress toward obtaining the GED at all schools)
- For students not employed, explore the possibility of providing structured volunteer community service internships (e.g., hospital volunteer, YMCA, and other age-appropriate agencies) as a transition to cooperative work experience.
- Clarify entry and exit policies for the program.

9. Allow students to enter Employment Plus at the beginning of second semester with the option to continue in the summer or to re-enroll the following fall:
   - To accommodate students identified at mid-year who currently must postpone enrollment until the following school year.
   - To increase enrollments at schools that are traditionally under enrolled.

10. Increase the initial enrollment in the program in each school to compensate for the high rate of attrition and to maximize the efficiency of the program (e.g., to maintain 15 students, enroll 17).

11. Address the imbalance of enrollments in the Employment Plus program in the six high schools in order to increase efficiency. As soon as feasible, shift the entire Employment Plus Program to the Center for Science and Technology where (a) more students could be served, (b) a better balance in class size could be achieved, (c) vocational programs are accessible, (d) transportation is available, (e) driver education is feasible, and (f) ties to the home school could be maintained.

12. Plan to offer a separate, non-vocational alternative GED preparation program for overage students on a semester format at the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology to be approved by the Virginia Department of Education:
   - To address the fact that one-third of the students enrolled in Employment Plus have obtained a passing GED score on the pretest before entering the program.
   - To address the fact that presently students in the regular program who may not desire a yearlong alternative program must formally drop out of school to enroll in an adult GED preparation program.
   - To retain all GED preparation programs for high school students as part of the overall senior high school program.

CHESAPEAKE
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EVALUATION PROPOSAL

PROGRAM EVALUATION PROPOSAL
CHESAPEAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PROJECT: Employment Plus
ADMINISTRATORS: Robert Head, Program Administrator for Vocational and Technology Education, and James McDonough, Supervisor of Vocational Education

PROJECT PROFILE:

DESCRIPTION: Employment Plus is a state-approved program on the high school level which offers an alternative to the traditional diploma program. Students in Employment Plus receive preparation for the General Education Development (GED) examination which is integrated with instruction in basic living skills, occupational/technical training, and pre-employability and employability skills (e.g., job interview skills, successful work attitudes and behaviors).

The GED certificate is a nationally recognized equivalent of a high school diploma. The GED preparation class offered in Employment Plus follows the guidelines of the GED preparation courses offered through the Adult Education Department. A variety of instructional strategies, including computer-assisted instruction, is used to teach the five areas of Math, Science, Social Studies, Writing Skills, and Literature. The self-pacing and experiential nature of the Employment Plus program provides flexibility in both the academic instruction and training for work as reflected by the individual training plans of students.

The program is designed for students to attend the Employment Plus program three hours each morning. The three-hour block of time is devoted to preparation for the GED examination, pre-employability and employability skills training, and instruction in basic living skills. Students who are involved in cooperative work experience leave school after the three-hour instructional block. A small percentage of students attend the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology in the afternoon to receive specific occupational/technical training.

The Employment Plus program, which began in the 1992-93 school year at Oscar Smith High School, is offered now in all the Chesapeake high schools. A program coordinator in each high school selects and enrolls students and provides instruction. Upon enrollment in the program, students enter Phase I of the Vocational Assessment process which identifies individual vocational aptitudes. Students typically enroll in the program for one year during which time they complete the GED. A total of eighty-five students currently are enrolled in Employment Plus in the school division; each high school program has an average of fifteen students for the school year.

GROUP SERVED: High school students who are seventeen years or older and two or more grade levels behind their age peers

To qualify for the program, students must score an established minimum on the GED pretest that reflects their ability to obtain a GED Certificate upon completion of the program. Students also must successfully complete an interview with the Employment Plus Coordinator and sign an agreement to seek and maintain employment.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: To provide an alternative to the traditional high school diploma program (i.e., instruction leading to the General Education Development Certificate) and to assist students in qualifying for and maintaining employment

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. Who is served?
   - (A) Applicant pool (e.g., size of pool and characteristics of students)?
   - (B) Selection criteria and process?
   - (C) Students enrolled?
   - (D) Students who could benefit but were not served?
2. What is the success rate of the Employment Plus program in terms of
   - (A) Number of students who obtained a GED Certificate?
   - (B) Number of students who successfully completed a cooperative work experience or an occupational/technical training program?
   - (C) Number of students still employed or in higher education two years after completion of the program?
3. How much does the program cost?
4. How does the program model compare with the recommendations of educational research on programs for at-risk students?
5. What is the overall level of satisfaction with the program?

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

1. (A) Applicant pool includes all students at least 17 years of age and two years behind age peers.
   - (B) Student selection criteria and process are standard among high schools.
   - (C) Ninety-five percent of students enrolled fit the expected student profile (i.e., at least 17 years of age, two years behind age peers, a minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest).
   - (D) All students who fit the profile and who would benefit from the program were enrolled.
2. With regard to the success rate of the program,
   - (A) Sixty-five percent (65%) of students who were in the program for twenty-four weeks or more and who took the GED examination obtained a GED Certificate.
   - (B) Eighty percent (80%) of students who were in the program for twenty-four weeks or more successfully completed a cooperative work experience or an occupational/technical training program.
   - (C) Eighty percent (80%) of students who successfully completed the program are employed or in higher education two years later.

3. The cost of enrolling a student in the program is reasonable when compared with serving a student in the regular high school program.
4. The program includes 95% of the items on a checklist of strategies recommended in educational literature for programs that serve at-risk students.
5. Seventy-five percent of current and past students, Employment Plus coordinators, high school principals, vocational counselors, and employers of students currently enrolled express satisfaction with the program.

DATA AND METHODS OF COLLECTION:

1. (A) To determine the size of the applicant pool, the report of overage students for June 1997 will be reviewed. The number of students in the report who are at least seventeen years old and two years behind will be compared with the number of students pretested for the 1997-98 program. To determine characteristics of the applicant pool, a profile of students who took the GED Pretest will be constructed (e.g., age, grade level, pretest scores).
   (B) The selection criteria and process will be determined from interviews with Employment Plus Coordinators, interviews with vocational counselors from each high school, and a survey of principals
   (C) The percent of students enrolled in the 1997-98 program who fit the expected profile will be obtained from Employment Plus records
   (D) An estimate of the number of students who could benefit from the program but were unable to be served will be determined from a survey of principals, from interviews with Employment Plus Coordinators, and from interviews with vocational counselors.
2. (A) The number of students enrolled in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 programs who obtained GED Certificates will be determined from Employment Plus records.
   (B) The number of students enrolled in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 programs who successfully completed a cooperative work experience or an occupational/technical training program will be obtained from Employment Plus records.
   (C) The number of students enrolled in the 1995-96 program who were employed two years after completion of the program will be determined from a survey of students.
3. Information regarding the cost of the program will be obtained from the Office of Budget
4. Direct correspondence between strategies recommended in educational literature and the components of the Employment Plus program will be determined from a comparison of program components with a checklist of strategies.
5. The level of satisfaction with the program will be determined from interviews with current students, survey of past students, interviews with Employment Plus Coordinators, interviews with vocational counselors, survey of employers of students currently enrolled, and survey of high school principals.

ANALYSIS PROCEDURES:

1. Apply performance criteria once data is collected.
2. Perform a cost-benefit analysis based on collected data.
3. Make recommendations based on findings and conclusions.

TIME LINE OF EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Interview Project Personnel Document Goals and Objectives Review Literature	September/October 1997
Establish Research Questions/Objectives and Performance Criteria	October 1997
Collect Data Analyze Data and Answer Research Questions Compare Performance Criteria for Success	November/December/January 1997-98
Report Findings and Recommendations	February 1998
Implement Recommendations	September 1999

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December 8, 1997
DATE

CHESAPEAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The traditional schooling offered in our nation's public school system has for decades served many students well (Quinn 1991). One overriding characteristic of successful students is that they generally possess the self-esteem to interact positively with others and to experience academic achievement (Uroff and Greene 1991). The result is a sense of belonging and the ability to thrive in the typical secondary school setting.

Academic success, unfortunately, has eluded another segment of the secondary population of students in our public schools. The factors which have contributed to the low self-esteem and subsequent lack of academic achievement of these students are varied. They often include family problems (e.g., low socioeconomic status) and personal problems (e.g., teenage pregnancy) related to the pressures and problems of modern-day life that manifest themselves in the educational setting (DeNofa 1993). In many cases, the family and personal problems of these students have been exacerbated by school-related factors such as suspensions, grade retention, course failure, tracking, and ability grouping. The sense of belonging experienced by the mainstream of students is replaced with feelings of alienation and hostility toward the educational environment in a group of students labeled "at-risk youth" (Griffin 1993).

Secondary students who are considered "at-risk" for educational failure are the students in middle and high school who require alternative educational interventions to ensure that they will graduate from high school (DeNofa 1993). Researchers estimate that up to thirty percent of students (approximately 500,000) do not finish high school each year, and the percentage is greater among minority groups in urban schools or students from very low socioeconomic backgrounds (Griffin 1993). One-third to one-half of all dropouts leave school prior to completing tenth grade, but the average age nationwide for dropping out is eighteen (Baldwin, Moffett, and Lane 1992). In Chesapeake, the typical student who drops out of school is sixteen or seventeen years old and in the ninth or tenth grade.

Ironically, the American system of equal educational opportunity for all probably has contributed to the poor performance of at-risk students (and their subsequent dropping out) by attempting to educate all students with essentially one pathway (Baldwin, Moffett, and Lane 1992). The bulk of research on the dropout problem for years focused largely on student behaviors that correlate with dropping out (e.g., poor academic performance, poor attendance). Running counter to this approach is more recent research devoted to (a) identifying practices in the schools which inadvertently aggravate the dropout problem (e.g., remediation, tracking, transitional classes in the early years) (Quinn 1991) and (b) searching for more effective programs to target the behaviors of at-risk students (Baker and Sansone 1990).

WHAT DOES EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE SAY ABOUT PROGRAMS FOR AT-RISK SECONDARY STUDENTS?

In 1990 the nation's governors and former president George Bush proclaimed a ninety percent high school graduation rate by the year 2000 as one of six national education goals. This proclamation served to recognize a decade of efforts by educators on behalf of at-risk youth (Baas 1991); it also prompted the realization that to achieve the goal the problem had to be addressed immediately on a broader and more substantial scale (Baldwin, Moffett, and Lane 1992).

Researchers and practitioners alike acknowledge the loss not only to the individual but to society as a whole when students do not complete their high school education (Baker and Sansone 1990). One group of researchers has estimated that the cost of half a million students leaving school prior to graduation each year is approximately fifty billion dollars in lost lifetime earnings. Nearly half of those who drop out before graduation receive welfare payments or are unemployed, and sixty percent of the prison population are high school dropouts (Baldwin, Moffett, and Lane 1992). There also is a consensus among researchers that, in the face of declining or disappearing support from family, church, and other community institutions, the public school system has the responsibility for overseeing the economic and educational development of at-risk youth (DeNofa 1993). In order to assist practitioners in dealing with the problem of nurturing at-risk students to high school completion, researchers have identified characteristics common to at-risk students and the factors that lead to an incomplete education (Baldwin, Moffett, and Lane 1992). More importantly, research provides some essentials of effective interventions for at-risk students (Manning 1993).

Characteristics of At-Risk Students

Every secondary school has students who are likely to leave school prematurely--students who are commonly referred to as "at-risk" (NASSP Curriculum Report 1990). Researchers emphasize that dropouts are not individuals who merely choose to walk away from school but are students who possess readily identifiable and predictable traits and characteristics. Characteristics of potential dropouts may include poor academic performance (although research is inconclusive regarding the role of intelligence in dropping out), low self-esteem, truancy, in-school delinquency problems, personal dissatisfaction with school, and feelings of lack of respect from peers and teachers. In addition, a typical at-risk student on the secondary level is two years behind his age peers. Statistics indicate that one retention increases the chances of a student dropping out by 50% while that percentage increases to 90% if the student is retained more than once.

At-risk students frequently come from homes in which the parents never completed high school, are underemployed or unemployed, or are headed by a single parent (Baldwin, Moffett, and Lane 1992). The problem, however, is not limited to children of lower socioeconomic status or to those living in urban areas. To the contrary, the problem cuts across racial, ethnic, and geographical lines.

Low socioeconomic status, personal problems independent of socioeconomic status and background

(e.g., substance abuse, pregnancy, trauma from divorce or otherwise unstable family life), as well as mental and physical health problems all correlate with being at risk (Quinn 1991).

Contributing School Factors

Student characteristics and family variables were long thought to be the chief predictors of school failure. More recent research places significant responsibility on the school itself as a contributor to the problem. A major criticism of researchers who emphasize the role of the school in student success or failure is that many schools refuse to adapt to students and require instead that all students adapt to the school. They blame inadequate and incomplete responses to at-risk students in the school for stimulating hostility, resentment toward the institution, and feelings of isolation (Quinn 1991).

Living in a society which currently is less structured and more transient (Thomas-Anderson and Bowden 1993), the majority of at-risk students arrive at school each day already feeling alienated and isolated (DeNofa 1993). When students also feel that they do not "belong" and have no attachment to school, they are more likely to bond to negative activities (e.g., drugs and alcohol). In addition, their lack of academic success frequently separates at-risk students from pro-school, successful students. As might be expected, at-risk students rarely participate in student activities, generally because they feel that there is nothing to gain from participation. The gulf between the individual and the school widens further as the student foregoes the rewards that could be obtained from participation in extracurricular and cocurricular activities, which often include talent development, maturity, and responsibility (Klesse and D'Onofrio 1993).

As mentioned previously, recent research concludes that some interventions designed to assist at-risk students, though well intended, actually compound the problems of the at-risk student. Remediation, for instance, has been widely used; yet the practice has reduced expectations for achievement and impeded the instructional pace so that the gap between the at-risk and their non-advantaged peers is increased. Remediation efforts also tend to emphasize the mechanics of basic skills while omitting the problem-solving skills that would greatly benefit at-risk youth. Other practices such as retention in grade, tracking, and ability grouping also have been found to be counterproductive to greater achievement of students at educational risk (Quinn 1991).

The emphasis (and some educators would say national obsession) for raising the educational standards required to receive a high school diploma continues. This emphasis provides an even stronger imperative to provide appropriate interventions for the at-risk student. As more courses and examinations are required to meet higher graduation standards and more students become at risk of not graduating, schools without better alternatives will likely depend on old standbys such as remediation and retention; and students will continue to fail (Herbert 1991).

Successful Approaches

Educational literature is unanimous in its call for positive and vigorous action to assist at-risk youth

(Baas 1991) and abounds with alternative strategies that are effective in dealing with these students. The personal and family characteristics of at-risk youth that are largely caused by the economic and social conditions with which they must cope are not likely to be ameliorated by the school alone (NASSP Curriculum Report 1990). The school, however, has the capacity to mobilize the community to provide the funding, resources, and volunteers (Baas 1991) required to attack the problem (Baldwin, Moffett, and Lane 1992).

Integral to the multi-faceted strategies recommended in the literature (DeNofa 1993) are measures that enhance self-concept, communication skills, and motivation (Baldwin, Moffett, and Lane 1992). Above all, the school has the obligation to make sure that the strategies offered do not contribute to the at-risk status of students (Baas 1991).

A Functional Curriculum with New Instructional Methods

Research recommends that any effective instructional plan for at-risk students be based on a curriculum suitable for serving all students (i.e., based on the four core subject areas plus technology). Many of the strategies recommended for at-risk groups (e.g., more parent contacts, links with the business community, and higher expectations for student performance) are appropriate for the total curriculum. Another key to success is the provision of a functional curriculum. A functional curriculum typically links skills and competencies of the classroom to the outside world. By focusing on study skills, living skills, social skills, and preparation for the world of work, the functional curriculum has been shown to increase motivation in secondary school students (NASSP Curriculum Report 1990).

Many students say that they leave school to begin work or to increase their work time (Baldwin, Moffett, and Lane 1992) and consider what they learn in school to be irrelevant to their occupational goals. A functional curriculum for high school students which includes cooperative work experiences can increase the retention of at-risk students by balancing the need to work with school responsibilities and thereby enhance the relevance of the educational experience (Baldwin, Moffett, and Lane 1992).

New instructional strategies are also recommended so that teachers can help increase the school's holding power on at-risk students. Teaching that emphasizes problem-solving (Baas 1991), computer-assisted learning (Quinn 1991), and both peer tutoring and cooperative learning have proved beneficial in reorienting potential dropouts. Researchers caution, however, that efforts must be well-planned and supervised, include established criteria for teamwork situations, provide inservice training for teachers, and include evaluations of the effectiveness of the endeavors (NASSP Curriculum Report 1990). The modeling of appropriate interpersonal skills that emphasize respect, trust, and caring by teachers is also critical to any instructional program for at-risk students (Thomas-Anderson and Bowden 1993).

Teachers also must rethink how students are evaluated. Grades usually are not incentives for excelling among at-risk students; repeated failure has resulted in an immunity to poor grades.

Alternative assessments such as individual learning contracts that de-emphasize competition across individuals and incentives based on work/study performance have been found to result in greater persistence on the part of students in intervention programs (Baldwin, Moffett, Lane 1992). Effective programs should have high expectations for the academic performance of at-risk students (Taylor and Reeves 1993). Teachers can ensure not only that methods and materials are available to achieve this goal but that students are aware of the expectations (Manning 1993).

The daily interaction that occurs between teachers and students is perhaps the most powerful influence on at-risk students; teachers determine whether plans, policies, and programs succeed or fail (Bucci and Reitzammer 1992). Inservice training and staff development is needed to guarantee skilled and knowledgeable professionals who can meet enthusiastically the challenges of reaching potential dropouts (NASSP Curriculum Report 1990).

Support Services and Resource Personnel

Guidance and counseling programs that are based on the developmental needs of students and are preventive in nature are recommended. The development of a close relationship with at least one caring adult is cited by researchers as the main essential for keeping at-risk students in school (NASSP Curriculum Report 1990) and underscores the value of individual counseling (DeNofa 1993). Other useful components of an effective guidance program include the following:

- Case management systems which involve teams of professionals who can recommend individual interventions (Baker and Sansone 1990)
- Mentoring programs
- Easy reentry programs for dropouts
- Career education
- Transitional support that includes consistent and comprehensive information sharing about students as they move from grade to grade (NASSP Curriculum Report 1990), especially from the middle to the high school setting (Nevetsky 1991)

Community service organizations, business and industry, and various city and state departments are valuable resources for providing staff and experience to schools. An integration of school services with the services of the community can help salvage at-risk youth (NASSP Curriculum Report 1990).

Parents have long been recognized as a crucial resource in the learning processes of their children. Unfortunately, many parents feel helpless to assume an influential role. One recommendation by researchers is that parents be tutored in how to develop the necessary rapport to assist students in their academic and social growth. In cases in which parents simply do not care, the intervention of professional resource personnel becomes even more important (NASSP Curriculum Report 1990).

The School Environment

Students must first attend school for a program of intervention to have the opportunity to improve

their academic achievement (DeNofa 1993). The importance of the school climate to a student's overall educational experience cannot be overstated. Climate is the feeling a student has in the classroom, when meeting the principal and counselors in the hallway, and upon leaving at the end of the day. Interactions with teachers and classmates also contribute to a student's perception of the school climate. The most positive learning climate possible is mandatory for at-risk students and exists when students are esteemed for their unique strengths and abilities (DeNofa 1993).

Class sizes, and when possible schools, should be small in size to promote one-on-one relationships and greater teacher accountability for interactions with students (Baas 1991). Some large school have implemented the school-within-a-school concept effectively to discourage anonymity among at-risk students (Baldwin, Moffett and Lane 1992).

Other strategies which signify attention to the physical setting and which have been effective in intervening to improve the achievement, attitudes, behaviors, attendance, and dropout rates of at-risk youth include the following:

- Strong administrative commitment on the building level
- Flexible scheduling (DeNofa 1993)
- Alternative crediting programs that feature both independent study and group work and permit around-the-clock and around-the-year coursework (Herbert 1991)
- Community service projects for involving students who otherwise might not participate in extracurricular and cocurricular activities
- GED Preparation programs (Baker and Sansone 1990)
- Programs which accelerate students by allowing them to make up credits they have missed and putting them on track for graduation with their age peers (Nevars 1992)

A number of researchers recommend at-risk programs that are distinct from the traditional secondary setting to solve the problems related to the school environment. Alternative schools are short-term intervention programs designed to develop academic and life skills through a structured learning environment (Griffin 1993). Alternative schools are typically organized with significantly smaller enrollments to provide an educational environment different from the traditional secondary school (Barr and Parrett 1997). Advocates of alternative schools cite advantages such as the ability of the school to structure activities around the needs of students and to involve students in the decision-making process (Uroff and Green 1991).

Researchers who prefer the use of options within the school itself, many of which were presented earlier, cite the cost effectiveness of using existing structures, which they believe contain more than sufficient expertise to deal with at-risk students (Baker and Sansone 1990).

Data and trend analyses at the national level regarding characteristics and factors that make students at-risk can inform local school districts regarding appropriate interventions for their student populations. Educational research recommends that school divisions also begin tracking their own local data and to do so as early as possible. By obtaining data related to their specific at-risk

population, a school division can select more accurately from the recommended strategies to design effective programs for their students (Baldwin, Moffett, and Lane 1992).

WHAT CAN BE CONCLUDED FROM THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE?

This review of educational literature focuses on factors associated with the type of student enrolled in Employment Plus and the components desirable in interventions designed to keep these students in school. The following conclusions emerged from the literature review:

1. Educational research overwhelmingly supports interventions for students who are at risk for not completing high school.
   - At-risk secondary students are students who require alternative interventions on the middle and high school levels to stay in school.
   - Currently approximately 30% of students do not finish high school each year.
   - The losses in terms of earning power for the individual and for society in general when students leave school prior to graduation are well documented: 50% of dropouts receive welfare payments or are unemployed; 60% of the prison population are dropouts.

2. At-risk students possess characteristics that are readily identifiable and predictable.
   - Examples of personal and family traits that characterize many at-risk students include the following:
     - Poor academic performance
     - Low self-esteem
     - Poor attendance
     - In-school delinquency problems
     - Feelings of lack of respect from peers and teachers
     - Two years behind age peers
     - Low socioeconomic status
     - Parents never completed high school
     - Parents are underemployed or unemployed
     - Single parent heads the household
     - History of substance abuse
     - Teen pregnancy
     - Mental and physical health problems

3. Personal and family characteristics previously were thought to be the major predictors of educational failure. Current research places significant responsibility on the school itself as a contributor to the problem, including the following:
   - Unresponsiveness of the school to the needs of at-risk students
   - Failure to match interventions to individual students
   - An impersonal school environment, especially in large schools or schools with large student-to-teacher ratios

- Lack of incentives to increase participation in extracurricular and cocurricular activities
- Inappropriate interventions, although well intended, that actually exacerbate the at-risk status of students, including remediation programs, retention, tracking, and ability grouping
- Emphasis on raising graduation standards with attendant increases in courses and examinations

4. Recommendations for interventions to serve at-risk students center around strategies related to curriculum, instructional methods, support services and resource personnel, and the school environment.

Curriculum and instruction recommendations:

- A sound curriculum that is suitable for serving all students.
- A functional curriculum (i.e., links skills and competencies of the classroom to the outside world) that also addresses study skills, living skills, social skills, and preparation for the world of work.
- Opportunities for cooperative work experiences
- Alternate instructional strategies that emphasize problem-solving, computer-assisted learning, and teamwork
- Staff development opportunities to assist teachers with alternate strategies; systematic evaluations to determine the effectiveness of strategies
- Modeling by teachers of appropriate interpersonal skills that emphasize respect, trust, and caring
- Alternative assessments such as individual learning contracts and incentives based on work-study performance
- High expectations for academic performance; no remediation
- Recognition that teachers are the greatest determinant of the success of a program

Support services and resource personnel recommendations:

- Guidance and counseling programs that are preventive in nature rather than crisis-oriented
- Individual counseling to assure contact with at least one caring adult
- Case management systems on the building level
- Mentoring programs to involve the community
- Career education to establish the relevance of school to occupational goals
- Transitional support as students move from grade to grade and school to school
- Integration of school services with community service organizations and connections with business and industry to increase resources and funding
- Parents involved in the learning processes of their children; assistance to parents as needed

Recommendations related to the school environment:

- A positive school climate in which students are esteemed for their unique strengths and abilities
- Small class sizes and when possible small schools
- Strong administrative commitment on the building level
- Flexible scheduling
- Alternative crediting programs
- Community service projects
- GED Preparation programs
- Acceleration programs which put at-risk students on track with age peers
- Alternative schools when funds are available

5. Local school divisions should begin early tracking of data on their student populations in order to supplement data from the national level regarding characteristics and factors which place their students at risk. With this information, school divisions are in the best position to select effective programs.

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CHESAPEAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

GROUP INTERVIEW / INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYMENT PLUS COORDINATORS

GROUP INTERVIEW/INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYMENT PLUS COORDINATORS

PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW: On November 19, 1997, Program Evaluation Team members met with five of the six Employment Plus Coordinators. Coordinators from Deep Creek High, Great Bridge High, Indian River High, Oscar Smith High, and Western Branch High provided information regarding the programs at their schools.

As a follow up to the group interview, Program Evaluation Team members discussed the program individually with coordinators in January 1998. Coordinators were asked the advantages and disadvantages of the program and were given the opportunity to offer suggestions for improving the program.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

1. Applicant pool includes all students at least seventeen years of age and two years behind age peers.
2. Student selection criteria and process are standard among high schools.
3. Ninety-five percent of students enrolled fit the expected student profile.
4. All students who fit the profile and who would benefit from the program were enrolled.
5. The program includes 95% of the items on a checklist of strategies recommended in educational literature for programs that serve at-risk students.
6. Seventy-five percent of Employment Plus coordinators express satisfaction with the program.

FINDINGS FROM THE GROUP INTERVIEW (see Chart 2, page 49, for a summary of findings from the individual interviews)**:**

1. **Describe your responsibilities as coordinator (i.e., student recruitment, screening, enrollment; instruction/cooperative work coordination).**

   Coordinators' descriptions of how they perform their responsibilities varied from school to school. Responsibilities, however, essentially are the same and include the following:

   - Recruiting students
     - In some schools in which the program has been in operation for several years, counselors automatically refer students to the program or students self-refer upon the recommendations of friends who have been in the program.
     - Some coordinators said their only option besides referrals is to go through a failure list that includes all students in the school to establish a pool of potential students.
     - Coordinators indicated that many of the students who enroll in the program have already dropped out of school and are contacted by the coordinator or counselor to recommend the program.
   - Screening students from the pool of initial applicants through GED pretesting and the interview process
     - Pretesting usually is done on an individual basis and with parental consent.

CHART 2
SUMMARY OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYMENT PLUS COORDINATORS

	Advantages of Program	Disadvantages of Program	Suggestions for Improving Program
School #1	An alternative to the regular program Opportunity to obtain the GED and to accomplish something Keeps students in the learning process (these are not dumb kids)	Do not see any disadvantages; we prepare them well; modeling my program after the other high schools Principal is great	Absences and tardies are an everyday battle with some of the students Set guidelines would help Would like to explore how late in the year can take a student--need flexibility
School #2	Opportunity for the student who has given up on the regular program Elevates student; student regains self-respect and dignity Often the first positive experience in several years Principal supports and gives autonomy	Disadvantaged students need a lot of continuous motivation	Must monitor students who are on the waiting list; may have someone drop out and the student on the waiting list may be gone Cannot get a true picture of number of students requesting the program because my class starts full, counselors inform students class is full; first come, first served Students lack of skills carries over into jobs; would like to see a volunteer service in lieu of working for pay Need a driver education component
School #3	Another chance to catch up Life skills an important component Core content areas absolutely necessary Work component good for some and for some an albatross	Need flexible entry and exit Some parents view GED as inferior and won't allow students to enter the program Students need to be able to take the GED Pretest during the year; need flexible entry and exit	Graduation ceremony should not be mandated; allow students who do not want to march to go once they get the GED in April; otherwise, can stay until June More flexibility needed in the work component; work requirement is not always something a student can or will do Provide programs for high-risk kids that are viewed as important with the needed resources
School #4	A second chance for students that we would lose	Difficult to work within the 30 absences per year policy	The program is not perfect but I like the way it is run; coordinators meet monthly to share information Possible that two teachers are needed in my school; hope the second teacher has a similar attitude toward the students and program
School #5	Saves students from dropping out Beneficial for the student, the school, and the community	Attendance of students is poor, but they have not been successful with the "rigors" before	The class is difficult; don't make it easy Always room for improvement--don't know how yet; have been with the program only four months
School #6	Second chance for students to complete their education Students gain work experience Students have a peer group with similar problems Provides a mentor who is "in their corner"	Absenteeism and how to combat it is a problem; otherwise, it is a win-win situation for students	Opportunity for students to participate in activities and feel more a part of the school Feeling of being disconnected and being just a GED program

- In most schools, parents are present during the interviews and must indicate support for the student enrolling in the program.
- Determining the final eligibility of students for the program; no student, however, is enrolled without approval of the principal
- Teaching three bells (usually one bell of pre-employability and employability skills, basic living skills and social skills and two bells of GED Preparation); coordinators also have one planning and two coordination bells
- Coordinating cooperative work experiences for students and visiting work sites and the Center for Science and Technology
  - Local school division funds are available to pay disadvantaged students in cooperative work experiences. Employment slots within the school division are filled by students from these schools. Coordinators in other schools provide contacts for students to obtain their own jobs.
- Working with probation officers and social workers to coordinate services in some schools
- Providing reports of student progress to parents

2. **How are students identified as potential candidates for the program (e.g., how are they referred, what is the basis for referrals, when are referrals made)?**
   - Some coordinators use the quarterly student failure list to identify potential students who are seventeen years and two years behind. This is a time-consuming task which involves checking a list of all students in the school who are failing regardless of age or grade-level status.
   - Counselors often recommend the program to students who appear to qualify.
   - In some schools, the vocational counselor works closely with the coordinator to identify potential students.
   - Teachers frequently recommend the program to students who are failing their classes.
   - In programs which have been in existence for several years, students often self-refer because they know about the program.
   - Students who have been in the program previously often recommend the program to friends.
   - Students are referred throughout the year; students are enrolled, however, in the fall during the first two or three months of the program.
   - November 30 is the deadline for entry into the program established by coordinators.
   - Occasionally some programs allow students with GED pretest scores above 190 who are highly motivated to enter after the established deadline.

3. **Describe the application process once students are referred (e.g., GED pretesting format; interviews).**
   - The coordinator usually administers the GED Pretest on an individual basis.
   - If a student scores the minimum on the pretest, the coordinator generally conducts an interview with the student and parent or guardian to determine the motivation of the

student to participate fully in the program and to seek employment in a cooperative work experience or to attend the Center for Science and Technology for occupational/technical training.

- The coordinator determines the final eligibility with approval by the principal.
- Students are enrolled on a first-come, first-served basis. Fifteen slots are available in each school; in some programs more students are enrolled to allow for attrition.

4. **What criteria are used for selecting students for enrollment from the group who initially applies?**
   - Students must make a minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest.
   - Students must demonstrate motivation to participate fully in the program and to seek cooperative work experience or attend the Center for Science and Technology.
   - Parental support is required to the extent possible.

5. **Is there any flexibility in selection requirements (e.g., regarding minimum GED scores)?**
   - Students must have the minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest.
     - Students who do not qualify initially are encouraged to stay in school and study on their own until they can score the minimum. In some cases, the coordinator will provide a GED book or materials to assist the student.
     - A score below the minimum required generally indicates comprehension problems that require more time for the student to succeed than is available in the Employment Plus program.
   - Most students in the program are required to be employed or seeking employment.
     - In a few cases, extenuating circumstances such as the lack of transportation or probation status have limited employment opportunities.

6. **Who determines final eligibility?**
   - The coordinator enrolls students upon the approval of the principal

7. **When may students enter and exit the program (i.e., is there an open entry-exit policy)?**
   - Students generally enter by the established deadline of November 30.
   - Students exit in the spring after taking the GED Exam unless they drop out. Students generally are allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony of the school if they acquire the GED Certificate and have participated fully in the Employment Plus program all year, but the requirements vary from school to school.

8. **What is recommended for students who do not meet the qualifications for the program?**
   - There are no other programs available in the school division to serve students who are seventeen years old and two years behind. Adult education classes are available but involve dropping out of school.

9. **In your opinion, are the identification and selection procedures used appropriate (e.g., methods of referral, criteria for selection, population of students served?**
   - Coordinators indicated that the identification and selection procedures are appropriate.

10. **In your opinion, are all students who could benefit from the program (i.e., students who meet the qualifications and wish to participate) given the opportunity to apply and enroll?** (See enrollment Chart 3, page 53.)
   - Classes are full at Indian River High, Western Branch High, and Oscar Smith High.
     - Because recruiting usually stops once the minimum of fifteen students is achieved, the Indian River High coordinator indicated it would be difficult to estimate how many more could be served.
     - The Oscar Smith High School coordinator estimated that another eight students probably could be served.
     - The Western Branch High coordinator said she has several students testing in November and that there probably are other students who could be served.
   - Classes are not full at Great Bridge High School.
     - The Great Bridge High coordinator indicated that because of the higher economic status of their student population many of those who would qualify for the program do not have an interest in the employment requirement of the program and thus elect not to enroll. Recruitment efforts have been ongoing.
   - Classes also are not full at Deep Creek High.
     - The Deep Creek High coordinator is new this year, and the program was late in getting started; recruitment efforts have been continuing.

11. **Describe a typical instructional day. Describe the cooperative work experience and occupational/technical training components.**
   - Students generally have two bells of GED Preparation, one bell of pre-employability and employability skills training, and then leave the high school for cooperative work experience or to attend the Center for Science and Technology for occupational/technical skills training.
   - A variety of instructional strategies are used in the GED Preparation and pre-employability/employability skills training, including group discussions, individualized instruction, and the use of computers.
   - Several versions of the GED Pretest are available and are used to assess progress periodically.

12. **What does the Employment Plus program provide to help students stay in school that the regular program does not (e.g., mentoring component)?**
   - The program represents a hope for success that many of the students thought was gone. It is a second chance to finish high school.
   - The support students provide to each other in the program is very important. They encourage each other to succeed.

CHART 3
ENROLLMENTS
1997-1998

SCHOOL	TEACHER	EMPLOYMENT PLUS STUDENTS*
Deep Creek High	John Barbarise	13
Great Bridge High	Marilyn Georges	9
Hickory High	Wiley Lee	12
Indian River High	Barry Kingery	17
Oscar Smith High	Lynn Yates	20
Western Branch High	Karen Jewett	14
TOTAL		**85** **(85 ÷ 6 = Avg 14.2 students per bell)**

*as of 9/30/97

13. **How would you describe the success of the program in meeting its goals and objectives (i.e., GED completion, cooperative work experience, pre-employability and employability skills training, employment or entry into higher education)?**
    - Coordinators consider the program to be a success.

14. **How would you rate your overall level of satisfaction with the program (i.e., components of the program, operation of the program, ability of the program to serve the intended population?**
    - Coordinators have a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the program.

15. **What suggestions do you have for improving the program?**
    - No suggestions were offered.

16. **Do coordinators have the opportunity to get together for information sharing?**
    - Coordinators meet once a month with the Vocational Supervisor to share information.

17. **Are the programs coordinated citywide?**
    - Coordinators consider the programs to be coordinated citywide.

18. **Is there a need for staff training to assist in instruction or job placement?**
    - Coordinators had no suggestions for staff training.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE GROUP INTERVIEW:

1. Coordinators are assigned the same responsibilities. Methods of carrying out the responsibilities appear to vary from school to school. Generally, the responsibilities of coordinators are to:
    - Recruit students.
        - This responsibility is greater in schools which do not have a large pool of applicants.
    - Screen students from the initial pool of candidates.
    - Determine final eligibility of students for the program.
    - Teach GED Preparation and pre-employability and employability skills.
    - Coordinate cooperative work experiences or occupational/technical training for students and visit work sites and the Center for Science and Technology.
    - Provide reports of progress to parents.
    - Coordinate services with other community agencies (e.g., social workers)
        - This responsibility varies among coordinators depending on the needs of the student population.

2. The selection criteria for enrolling students in the program are standard among schools.
    - All schools require a student to be at least seventeen years of age and two years behind their age peers to apply to the program.
    - All schools require a student to achieve a minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest.

- All schools require an interview with the student and parents or guardian at which time the student exhibits motivation to participate in GED Preparation as well as a cooperative work experience or occupational/technical training at the Center for Science and Technology.
- Coordinators indicated the criteria are appropriate for most students. One coordinator indicated that in her school a number of students of higher socioeconomic status who could benefit from the GED Preparation component do not enroll because they do not value the employment component of the program.

3. There is no standard process among schools for identifying a pool of students who are seventeen years of age, who are two years behind their age peers, and who could benefit from the program. As a result, it appears that not all students who could benefit from the program have the opportunity to apply.
   - The identification process is informal and varies from school to school. Informal methods of identification may include referrals by teachers, referrals by counselors, self-referrals by students, contacts by coordinators, and examination of the quarterly failure list.
   - Coordinators indicated that the process is appropriate.

4. Students who meet the final eligibility requirements for enrolling in the program (i.e., age, grade level, GED Pretest, and interview requirements) are enrolled on a first-come, first-served basis. As a result, not all students who fit the profile and would benefit from the program are enrolled in schools which have a large pool of eligible students.
   - Final eligibility is determined by the Employment Plus Coordinator with the approval of the principal.
   - Coordinators indicated the final eligibility requirements and enrollment process is appropriate.

5. Based on interviews with coordinators, all students enrolled fit the expected student profile of being at least seventeen years of age, two years behind age peers, and having at least the minimum score required on the GED Pretest.

6. Most students are employed or seeking employment.
   - In some cases students have had difficulty obtaining employment because of extenuating circumstances such as lack of transportation or probation status.

7. Students generally enter the Employment Plus Program before a deadline of November 30 and exit upon completion of the GED Examination the following spring unless they drop out of the program.

8. Rules governing participation in the graduation ceremony vary from school to school.
   - Participation in the ceremony generally requires full participation in the program and acquiring the GED Certificate. Definitions of full participation appear to vary.

9. The Employment Plus program appears to be the only senior high alternative to the regular program for students who are seventeen years of age or older and two years behind their age peers.

10. Employment Plus coordinators appear to be uncertain as to whether other students in their schools could benefit from the program. This is likely due to the fact that (a) there is no standard procedure for identifying the pool of students who could benefit from the program and (b) once the fifteen slots are filled at a school recruitment efforts end.

11. Based on the responses of coordinators to the checklist of strategies recommended in educational literature for at-risk students and their comments during the interviews, the Employment Plus program offers recommended strategies including:
    - A functional curriculum based on the four core subject areas which offers pre-employability/employability skills, cooperative work experiences, computer-assisted learning, high expectations for academic work, a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult, linkages with business and industry, parental involvement, small class sizes, and opportunities for acceleration.

12. Employment Plus coordinators expressed a high level of satisfaction with the program.
    - Coordinators consider the program to be a second chance for students to complete high school.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS:

1. According to Employment Plus Coordinators, the major advantage of the program is that it keeps this group of students from dropping out of school. The program provides a second chance for students who could not succeed in the regular program. Other advantages include:
    - The opportunity for work experience
    - The opportunity for life skills training
    - A peer group with similar circumstances
    - A supportive teacher

2. Employment Plus Coordinators cited the following disadvantages:
    - The need for continuous motivation of students (e.g., high absenteeism)
    - Lack of flexibility with regard to entry and exit during the school year
    - Negative attitude of some parents toward the program
    - Absenteeism of students and an attendance policy that is the same as that of the regular program

3. Employment Plus Coordinators had the following suggestions:
    - Set guidelines divisionwide regarding absences and tardies
    - Provide greater flexibility with regard to entry and exit during the school year
    - Provide the opportunity for driver education

- Require participation in community service projects or other alternatives to the paid cooperative work experience
- Provide greater opportunities for students to participate in school-related activities
- Provide an additional teacher at some schools

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Retain the Employment Plus program as an alternative to the regular high school program.
   - The program should continue to serve students who are at least seventeen years of age and two years behind their age peers.
   - Final eligibility requirements in all Employment Plus programs should include the current practice of:
     (1) Obtaining an established minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest.
     (2) Completing an interview with the Employment Plus coordinator in which the motivation to participate fully in GED Preparation and cooperative work experience, occupational/technical training, or other vocational training is demonstrated.
     (3) Obtaining parental support for the student while in the program to the extent possible.

2. Promote the Employment Plus program as part of the core program of the high school.
   - Communicate the legitimacy of the Employment Plus program to administrators, faculty, students, and parents as an option for overage students who cannot succeed in the regular program.
   - Provide greater opportunities for students to participate in school-related activities (e.g., assemblies).

3. Revise and standardize the process for identifying the pool of students who initially apply for the Employment Plus Program to ensure that all students who could benefit from the program (i.e., would qualify and wish to participate) have the opportunity to apply.
   - After each nine-week period, use the student data management system to generate a list of students in the school who are at least seventeen years of age, two years behind their age peers, and are failing two or more subjects.
   - Establish a standard means of informing students on the list and their parents of the Employment Plus program.
   - The practice of accepting referrals by teachers, counselors, coordinators, and self-referrals by students should be used in conjunction with a more formal process of identification to ensure that students who will benefit most from the program are selected for enrollment.

4. Explore the possibility of offering a separate, non-vocational GED Preparation program for students who are at risk for dropping out of the regular program but who do not require or desire the employment component.

5. To provide greater flexibility regarding entry and exit, allow students to enter Employment Plus at the beginning of second semester with the option to continue in the summer or to re-enroll the following fall.

6. Explore the need for an additional teacher in high schools which have large applicant pools for the Employment Plus program.

7. To facilitate the employment of students in all of the senior high schools:
   - Explore the possibility of increasing job placement opportunities within the school division.
   - Provide Employment Plus students with the opportunity to take driver education.
   - Consider student participation in structured volunteer community service internships (e.g., hospital volunteer, YMCA) as a transition to the cooperative work experience.

8. Develop and use a manual with guidelines for all coordinators including:
   - Responsibilities of Employment Plus Coordinators
   - Process for identifying the initial pool of students to apply for the program
   - Student eligibility criteria and final selection process
   - Entry/exit policy
   - Rules governing student employment during the program
   - Policy regarding student absences and tardies
   - Rules governing participation in school activities and graduation ceremonies
   - Student discipline including due process rights of students

CHESAPEAKE
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

GROUP INTERVIEW WITH VOCATIONAL COUNSELORS

GROUP INTERVIEW WITH VOCATIONAL COUNSELORS

PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW: On November 20, 1997, Program Evaluation Team members met with six vocational counselors. Vocational counselors from Deep Creek High, Great Bridge High, Indian River High, Oscar Smith High, and Hickory High provided information regarding the programs at their schools. In addition, the vocational counselor from the Center for Science and Technology provided information regarding the arrangement with the Center for Science and Technology to provide occupational/technical training to Employment Plus students who qualify.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

1. Applicant pool includes all students at least seventeen years of age and two years behind age peers.
2. Student selection criteria and process are standard among high schools.
3. Ninety-five percent of students enrolled fit the expected student profile.
4. All students who fit the profile and who would benefit from the program were enrolled.
5. The program includes 95% of the items on a checklist of strategies recommended in educational literature for programs that serve at-risk students.
6. Seventy-five percent of Employment Plus coordinators express satisfaction with the program

FINDINGS:

1. **Describe your role in the Employment Plus program.**
    - In most of the schools, the vocational counselor has an active role in identifying students to be referred to the Employment Plus program.
        - In one school, the vocational counselor's role is limited in that he serves only as a resource person who explains the Employment Plus program along with any other options available to the student. The Employment Plus program is more isolated in this school and has received criticisms from faculty and staff.
        - In one school, the vocational counselor provides a profile of qualifications for the program to teachers who then refer students to the program. This counselor indicated that students are sometimes placed in the program by the administration and that these are not the most successful placements. When the coordinator selects the student, a bond is more likely to be created.
        - In several schools, vocational counselors monitor the progress of students in the program and try to offer alternatives to students who exit the program.
        - In some cases, students in the program are treated as other seniors and receive the same level of support.
            - One counselor said that she gets to know the students well and congratulates them on their enrollment in the program. The students know they are different, but the school has had success with them.
        - All counselors conduct vocational assessments of Employment Plus students once they are enrolled.

- The vocational counselor at the Center for Science and Technology monitors the progress of Employment Plus students in their occupational/technical training programs.

2. **How are students identified as potential candidates for the program (i.e., how are students referred, what is the basis for referrals, when are students referred)?**
   - Some vocational counselors conduct exit interviews with students who are dropping out and use this opportunity to recommend the program.
     - Many students stop attending the regular program after their fifteenth absence (an automatic withdrawal), some students come back and contact the counseling department for alternatives.
     - The case management program has been helpful as a resource to recommend options for students involved in the court system.
   - Some vocational counselors use the quarterly student failure list to identify potential students who are at least seventeen years old and two years behind. According to one vocational counselor, the student data management system should be able to generate a list of students who would be potential candidates for the program.
   - Students may be referred to the vocational counselor for information regarding Employment Plus by other counselors.
   - In some cases students self-refer to the vocational counselor.
   - Students are referred throughout the year.
     - In schools with a large number of eligible students, enrollment ends within a few weeks of the program beginning.
     - In other schools, students may be enrolled during the year based on the individual circumstances.

3. **What is the application process once students are referred (e.g., pretesting format; interviews)?**
   - The Employment Plus Coordinator generally administers the GED Pretest; in one school the vocational counselor pretests students.
   - Students and parents participate in an interview with the Employment Plus Coordinator in most schools. In some schools, parents do not participate in the interviews.
   - Some students enter the program through administrative placement.

4. **What criteria are used to select students for enrollment from the group who initially applies?**
   - Once students meet the qualifications of being at least seventeen years of age and two years behind their age peers, the major criterion for acceptance in all schools is a minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest.
     - In one school, a minimum score on the pretest is all that is required for enrollment.
     - Coordinators generally agreed with the minimum score required.

- In some schools successful interviews in which students demonstrate a motivation to participate fully in the program and a show of parental support are included in the criteria for acceptance.

5. **Is there any flexibility in selection requirements (e.g., regarding minimum GED scores)?**
   - Students must make the minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest to be accepted.
   - Students must agree to participate in cooperative work experience or to attend the Center for Science and Technology for occupational/technical training.
     - Exceptions have been made in some schools for students with extenuating circumstances such as lack of transportation and probation status, but these students continue to seek employment.

6. **Who determines final eligibility?**
   - The coordinator determines the final eligibility with approval by the principal.

7. **What is recommended for students who do not meet the qualifications for the program?**
   - There are no other programs available in the school division. Adult education classes are available to those who drop out.

8. **When may students enter and exit the program (i.e., is there an open entry-exit policy)?**
   - Students in most schools enter within the first month of the program.
     - In schools which do not have sufficient numbers to fill the slots, there is more flexibility for entry during the first semester.
     - In some schools, students may enroll at any time.
   - Two counselors said their students would benefit from more flexibility with regard to entry and exit (GBHS; HHS).
     - Allowing students to enter the program during second semester would keep students from having to wait until the following year to begin working on the GED. The wait increases the possibility that the student will drop out.
     - Flexibility to exit the program is needed in at least one school (GBHS). Pretest scores there are traditionally high because slower students are served well in their special education programs. It is difficult to hold students for a full year when they could pass the GED Exam before the traditional April testing.
   - The policy of allowing Employment Plus students who pass the GED exam to participate in the graduation ceremony varies from school to school.
     - In most schools, students must pass the class as well as the GED exam and participate in cooperative work experience to be able to participate in the ceremony.
     - In at least one school, passing the GED exam is the only requirement to participate.

- Latecomers generally do not have the option of participating in the graduation ceremony.
- Participation in the graduation ceremony is more important in some schools than in others.

9. **In your opinion, are the identification and selection procedures used appropriate (e.g., methods of referral, criteria for selection, population of students served)?**
   - One counselor suggested flexibility with regard to the cooperative work experience in their school. Students at this school often either choose not to enroll because they do not value the employment component or cannot obtain employment although willing to work.
   - This counselor also suggested that students who are sixteen years of age be eligible for enrollment if they will turn seventeen while in the program.
   - Other counselors believe the current age requirement is appropriate. They said (1) students must have permission from the principal to take the GED if they are not eighteen years of age, and (2) students still have the opportunity to succeed in the regular program at sixteen and the program should not be viewed as an "easy out."

10. **In your opinion, are all students who could benefit from the program (i.e., students who meet the qualifications and wish to participate) given the opportunity to apply and enroll?**
   - Most of the vocational counselors indicated that there probably are students who do not have the opportunity to apply to the program; counselors described informal and inconsistent procedures for identifying applicants similar to the procedures described by coordinators.
   - Some vocational counselors commented that more classes are needed (OSHS; IRHS) to provide the opportunity for more students to enroll; others emphasized that greater flexibility in selection criteria and program policies would make it possible to serve more students (GBHS; HHS).
   - A counselor commented that the need for the program will be even greater with the new standards of learning and increased graduation requirements.
   - A counselor noted that counselors and coordinators must be careful not to solicit students for Employment Plus who could succeed in the regular program.

11. **Describe a typical instructional day. Describe the cooperative work experience and occupational/technical training components.**
   - Vocational counselors confirmed that in most schools the instructional day includes GED Preparation and pre-employability/employability skills in the morning and cooperative work experience or occupational/technical training in the afternoon.
   - Some counselors noted that the cooperative work experience component is more successful in those programs which receive funds budgeted by the school division to employ students (OSHS and IRHS) and that some students have other obstacles to employment which are beyond their control.

- Currently, six students are enrolled at the Center for Science and Technology for occupational/technical training; twelve students were enrolled at the beginning of the year. The counselor from the Center indicated that the arrangement has not worked out well.
  - Problems are due largely to poor attendance.
  - Some coordinators are not visiting the Center to check on students' progress as they should.
  - The two programs (Employment Plus and CCST) are somewhat "out of synch" since the Center is not an option for students who enroll in the program after the second week of school.

12. **What does the Employment Plus program provide to help students stay in school that the regular program does not (e.g., mentoring component)?**
    - Coordinators mentioned the following aspects of the program as important to this group of students:
      - The bond that students have with the coordinator
      - Another option for completing a high school education
      - Being classified as a senior
      - The opportunity to be employed
      - A curriculum which is viewed as relevant
      - A program in which there is a clear measure of progress

13. **How would you describe the success of the program in meeting its goals and objectives (i.e., GED completion, cooperative work experience, pre-employability and employability skills training, employment or entry into higher education)?**
    - Vocational counselors consider the program to be a success.
    - A counselor noted that success should be measured by factors other than the number of students obtaining the GED and employment.
      - In most instances students in the program raise their scores from the GED Pretest, and the program is holding the students in school.

14. **How would you rate your overall level of satisfaction with the program (i.e., components of the program, operation of the program, ability of the program to serve the intended population)?**
    - Vocational counselors expressed a high level of satisfaction with the program; suggestions for improvements, however, were offered by some counselors.
    - Counselors indicated that parents are grateful for the program.

15. **What suggestions do you have for improving the program?**
    - One counselor suggested the following to improve the program at their school (GBHS):
      - Flexible entry and exit dates based on a semester format will benefit more students (especially needed with a 4 X 4 schedule).

- Requiring vocational courses is compatible with GED Preparation; maintaining a job is sometimes an obstacle for students.
- A division-based enterprise/business and academy if employment remains a requirement of the program would assist hard-to-place students with getting jobs.
- Lowering the age requirement to at least sixteen years upon enrollment but turning seventeen while in the program would broaden the base of students served.
- Offering a GED Preparation program only would benefit a group of students who choose not to enroll in the Employment Plus program.
  - Another counselor commented that students enter their program primarily because they want the GED.

- Other counselors, including the Center for Science and Technology counselor, suggested that coordinators be required to follow up on cooperative work experiences more often.
- A counselor commented that there is a definite need for more programs at the Center for Science and Technology (e.g., building maintenance) to serve this group of students.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The role of the vocational counselor in the Employment Plus program varies from school to school.
   - Participation by counselors varies from serving only as a resource for information to actively following students' progress in the program.

2. The selection criteria for enrolling students in the program vary among schools.
   - Initial criteria of being seventeen years or older and two years behind age peers are standard among schools.
   - Final selection criteria vary from simply passing the GED Pretest to also successfully completing an interview with the coordinator, providing evidence of strong parental support, and agreeing to a cooperative work experience.

3. There is no standard process among schools for identifying a pool of students who are seventeen years of age, who are two years behind their age peers, and who could benefit from the program. As a result, it appears that not all students who could benefit from the program have the opportunity to apply.
   - Vocational counselors generally indicated that this process could be improved (e.g., using the student data management system in the high schools to generate data on potential candidates).

4. Not all students who fit the profile and who would benefit from the program are enrolled.
   - In some schools there are not enough slots to accommodate all students.
   - In some schools the inflexibility of the entry and exit dates and the cooperative work

experience component keep some students from enrolling. In addition, some students who agree to the cooperative work experience have difficulty finding employment due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., lack of transportation, probation status, lack of pre-employability skills).

5. Based on interviews with vocational counselors, all students enrolled fit the expected student profile of being at least seventeen years of age, two years behind age peers, and having at least the minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest.

6. The cooperative work experience component works well in schools that have a large applicant pool from which to select students who can find employment or in schools that receive funds budgeted by the school division to employ students.
   - In other schools, students find it difficult to find employment once they are in the program or do not value the employment component and choose not to enroll in the program.

7. The success of the arrangement between the Employment Plus program and the Center for Science and Technology to provide occupational/technical training to students has been minimal.
   - Students who enter the Employment Plus program after the first two weeks of school do not have the opportunity to enroll in the program.
   - Many of the students who enroll drop out due to attendance problems.
   - In some cases Employment Plus coordinators are not actively monitoring student progress (e.g., visits to CCST are infrequent).

8. The policy regarding entry and exit varies among schools.
   - Schools with a large applicant pool can enforce the established cutoff date for entry in November whereas other schools need more flexibility to fill the slots in the program.

9. Rules governing participation in the graduation ceremony vary among schools.
   - Some schools require only that students obtain their GED Certificates; other schools also require enrollment in the program from the beginning of the school year and full participation in a cooperative work experience or other vocational training.

10. The Employment Plus program is the only alternative to the regular senior high program for students who are seventeen years of age or older and two years behind their age peers.

11. Based on the responses of vocational counselors to the checklist of strategies recommended in educational literature for at-risk students and their comments in the interviews, the Employment Plus program model offers many of the recommended strategies.

12. Vocational counselors have a high level of satisfaction with the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Retain the Employment Plus program as an alternative to the regular high school program.
   - The program should continue to serve students who are at least seventeen years of age and two years behind their age peers.
   - Final eligibility requirements in all Employment Plus programs should include the current practice of:
     (1) Obtaining an established minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest.
     (2) Completing an interview with the Employment Plus coordinator in which the motivation to participate fully in GED Preparation and cooperative work experience or other vocational training is demonstrated.
     (3) Obtaining parental support for the student while in the program to the extent possible.
   - The current practice in which coordinators determine final eligibility with the approval of the principal should be modified to include a team approach.
   - A more flexible policy regarding entry and exit should be considered (e.g., entry at the beginning of second semester to accommodate students identified at mid-year). Some schools do not have a large applicant pool from which to select a group of students who can begin in the fall and exit in the spring (e.g., GBHS and HHS).
   - The need for an additional class in the Employment Plus program in schools with a large pool of applicants (e.g., IRHS, OSHS, WBHS) should be considered.

2. Explore the possibility of (1) increasing job placement opportunities through the school division to facilitate the employment of students in all of the senior high schools, (2) under unique circumstances, offering students the opportunity to enroll in vocational courses that provide specific job skills (e.g., catering, computer training) as an alternative to the cooperative work experience, and (3) placing more responsibility with coordinators to assist students in obtaining employment (coordinators have two coordinating bells under the six-bell schedule and an extended contract in the summer).

3. Reexamine the arrangement with the Center for Science and Technology for providing occupational/technical training to Employment Plus students.
   - Allow students to enter the program when they enter Employment Plus.
   - Develop a "work adjustment" program (e.g., safety rules) to prepare students who enter CCST vocational programs late.
   - Address attendance and behavior issues which hinder the success of students in the program.
   - Increase the contact between the Employment Plus coordinators and the staff of the Center for Science and Technology.

4. Explore the possibility of offering on a semester format a separate, non-vocational GED Preparation program for students who are at risk for dropping out of the regular program but do not require or desire a yearlong program.

5. Revise and standardize the process for identifying the pool of students who initially apply for the Employment Plus Program to ensure that all students who could benefit from the program (i.e., would qualify, are not likely to succeed in the regular program, and wish to participate) have the opportunity to apply.
   - After each nine-week period, use the student data management system to identify students who are at least seventeen years of age, two years behind their age peers, and are failing two or more subjects.
   - Establish a standard means of informing students on the list who could benefit from the program and their parents about the Employment Plus program.
   - The practice of accepting referrals by teachers, counselors, coordinators, and self-referrals by students should be used in conjunction with a more formal process of identification to ensure that students who will benefit most from the program are selected for enrollment.

6. Standardize among schools and clarify the following:
   - Importance of the role of the vocational counselor in providing ongoing support to Employment Plus students
   - Process for identifying the initial pool of students who apply for the program
   - Student eligibility criteria (e.g., parent's role) and final selection process
   - The policy regarding entry and exit for the program
   - Rules governing student employment during the program
   - Rules governing participation in school activities and graduation ceremonies

CHESAPEAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS

INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS

PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEWS: Interviews with students were conducted to obtain information regarding the selection process and the overall level of satisfaction with the program among students.

Students in each of the six high schools were interviewed as a group by members of the Program Evaluation Team. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and were conducted at Great Bridge and Hickory high schools on Friday November 21, 1997, at Oscar Smith and Indian River high schools on Monday, November 24, 1997, and at Deep Creek and Western Branch high schools on Tuesday, November 25, 1997. A total of approximately sixty-five students were present for the interviews.

PERFORMANCE CRITERION FOR SUCCESS:

Seventy-five percent of students currently enrolled express satisfaction with the program.

FINDINGS: See Chart 4, pages 71 and 72, for a summary of the interviews.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. **How were you referred to the Employment Plus program? Describe the steps taken to apply to the program once you were referred.**

   Students were referred to the Employment Plus program in a variety of ways.
   - Students were referred predominantly by counselors and friends.
   - Students also were referred by teachers, relatives, administrators, and coordinators. In some cases, students who were familiar with the program self-referred.
   - Students who responded to the question said they applied to the program by taking a pretest and then being interviewed by the Employment Plus Coordinator.

2. **What circumstances led you to enroll in the Employment Plus program rather than staying in the regular program?**

   Students overall said they had feelings of not being connected to the regular program.
   - Students cited excessive absences and/or poor grades that put them behind their age peers.
   - Students said the regular program required them to manage too many classes and had large teacher/student ratios.
   - Students indicated they were uncomfortable in classes with students who were younger.

CHART 4
SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS*

	Senior High School #1 (9 students)	Senior High School #2 (4 students)	Senior High School #3 (7 students)	Senior High School #4 (17 students)	Senior High School #5 (17 students)	Senior High School #6 (11 students)
Method of referral Application process	Counselor, friend, self, teacher	Counselor, friend, self Pretest/interview	Counselor, relative, principal, another student Pretest/interview	Friend, principal, assistant principal, coordinator	Friend, teacher	Counselor, relative, principal, self-referral, letter from the coordinator
Why lack of success in regular program	Too many classes for an ADD student, no connection to regular program, too many students	Attendance problems, no connection to regular program	Attendance problems; long school day; the time that would be required to make up credits; older than classmates	Attendance problems; poor grades; long school day with too many classes to organize, too many students per teacher	Attendance problems; low grades; oldest student	No connection to regular program; discipline problems; too many students per teacher
Typical instructional day	Assignment on board, explanation, group work on GED employability skills, some use of computers, assessments every 9 weeks, leave at noon to go to jobs	Get notebooks and work on assignment on board, GED/employability skills, will be using computers later, leave at noon to go to jobs or Center for Science/Technology	Begin with current events; GED/ employability skills in the morning; work on computers 2 hours per week; leave at noon for work experience, leave at noon to go to jobs or Center for Science/Technology	Begin with current events; GED/ employability skills; will be using computers later; leave at noon for work experience; leave at noon to go to jobs or Center for Science/Technology	GED/employability skills in the morning; assessments with GED Pretest every 9 weeks; work on computers on Monday; leave at noon to go to jobs or Center for Science/Technology	GED/employability skills in the morning; leave at noon to go to jobs or Center for Science/Technology
Cooperative work experience	Most students working, one said can't get a job and prog needs to help, one hospital volunteer and one student in catering class in regular program; students obtain their jobs, several had jobs before entering, work evenings or afternoons, all entered too late for Center for Science/Technology	Three students employed, one student attends Center for Science/Technology	Students working or trying to get a job, one student attends Center for Science/ Technology	Students working or trying to get a job; one student attends Center for Science/ Technology (all applied but were either too late for enrollment or could not meet attendance requirements); coordinator provides contacts; school division slots provided	Students working or trying to get a job; one student attends Center for Science/ Technology	Students working or trying to get a job; two students attend Center for Science/ Technology; coordinator provides contacts but students get jobs
Likelihood of graduation w/o program	All said would have dropped out or been put out because of being overage	All said would not have graduated, some had already dropped out and came back	All said would not have graduated; one student not allowed back into regular program	All said would not have graduated; would have been too old by the time credits were made up	All said would not have graduated; would take too long to make up missed credits	All said would not have graduated; one student said he would be at home doing nothing without the program

*Every group did not respond to every question; all students in a group did not respond to every question.

CHART 4 (continued)

Contribution of program to staying in school	Shorter time frame to complete; fewer people to deal with; more individual attention; no homework; a more relaxed atmosphere	Shorter day; goal of getting GED achievable and relevant; smaller class size; teacher assistance	Can realize goal of graduating; shorter classes; GED an achievable and relevant goal	Shorter time frame to complete; more individual attention; motivated to get a GED	Shorter day; good teacher who stays on the students to succeed and provides individual help	Easier to focus on the GED subjects; students encourage each other; GED subjects relevant; a good teacher who does not pressure students
Suggestions for improving program	Set up a program to provide jobs--removed from prog if no job but difficulty finding employment; program not advertised enough	Provide opportunity to participate in sports in the regular program; grant senior privileges such as parking	Space out GED topics; provide a driver education class; increase number of absences allowed (14 per year now)	Provide a driver education class to help with getting to jobs	Provide more slots in the program for other students; allow students to work more hours in school division jobs; allow students to participate in sports; provide an on-the-road component of driver education	Allow students to participate in sports--lots of talent wasted; provide driver education to help get to jobs; permit students to take the GED (from a student in the program two years)
Future plans	Most would like to go to the community college or technical school; others will join the military or continue working	All would like to go to college	Some would like to go to college or technical school; others do not know	Most would like to go to the community college; one would like to attend the Police Academy; several would like to join the military; some will continue working	Most would like to go to college or trade school; others not sure of their plans	Most would like to go to the community college; some would like to join the military and are aware that some branches require college credits to join; others will continue working
Level of satisfaction	Students satisfied but (1) not allowed in the main building without teacher; humiliating to go to rest room as a group; (2) cannot voice opinions; (3) school still has control but not a part of the school; (4) discipline rules for the class inconsistent and sometimes arbitrary	Students satisfied or very satisfied	Students satisfied	Students satisfied	Students satisfied	Students satisfied or very satisfied
Other comments	Students removed from the prog after 7 absences; most have driver's license; know expectations of program and out if do not meet them; more students could benefit from the prog if it were advertised-many want to be in; unclear policy regarding graduation ceremony	Other students could benefit from the program; teacher does a good job	Students removed from the program after 7 absences in a semester; other students could benefit from the program, but many just want to drop out and do nothing	Students welcome to leave if not satisfied with program; one student said she had the experience of dropping out and trying to work and support herself--now glad to be back in school	Stresses of my home situation contributed to problems with the regular program	Teacher treats students with a lot of respect; am the SCA rep for the program; learn things that will be used in life--never knew you should write a letter to thank someone for an interview; take the pretest when the regular program takes exams; students are required to stay after school an hour until get a job; are like a big family; other students could benefit from the program

•Every group did not respond to every question; all students in a group did not respond to every question

- The time required to make up lost credits would have resulted in students being too old to complete the regular program.

3. **Describe a typical day in the program for you.**

Students indicated they receive instruction through a variety of teaching strategies in all subjects of the GED examination and in pre-employability and employability skills in the morning. Most students said they leave at noon for the cooperative work experience or to attend the Center for Science and Technology.

- Students in one school mentioned that computer-assisted instruction is provided once a week while students from several other schools said computer-assisted instruction had not been available up to the time of the interviews.

4. **Describe your cooperative work experience? If you are not involved in cooperative work experience, why? Do you remain in school in the afternoon if you do not work?**

Employment Plus students interviewed are either employed, seeking employment, attending the Center for Science and Technology, or in other vocational training.

- Students employed in the community work largely in minimum-wage, service-related jobs (e.g., fast food restaurants); some students are employed by the school division.
  - Students who are not employed indicated they have been seeking employment.
- Only a small percentage of students from each school attend the Center for Science and Technology
  - Students either began the program too late to enroll at the Center for Science and Technology or were unable to meet the attendance and disciplinary requirements of the program.
- Students who are unemployed and not enrolled at the Center for Science and Technology leave school after GED Preparation ends at noon.
  - Students in one school are required to remain in school an extra hour in the afternoon until they find employment.

5. **Would you have been likely to graduate without the program?**

Students said they would not have completed high school without this program.

6. **How has the Employment Plus Program helped you stay in school?**

Students responded that the program has kept them in school by providing the following:

- Preparation for the GED which is a clear, achievable, and relevant goal and results in students completing high school.
- A shorter school day, fewer classes, and less time to exit high school.
- Fewer students in classes on a daily basis.

- Identification with one teacher who is perceived by most students to be a good teacher who cares about their success and is willing to provide individual assistance.

7. **Do you have any suggestions for changes to the program that would help you either with completing the GED or the cooperative work experience?**

Most students like the Employment Plus Program. According to the students, however, the following would facilitate or increase participation in the program:

- Provide a means for getting jobs.
  - Employment is a requirement, but many students have transportation or other problems which hinder their ability to be employed (evidenced by the fact that some students are looking for jobs but still unemployed).
- Allow students to participate more fully as a senior in the home school with privileges such as participation in sports and access to driver education.
  - Students in one school indicated that they essentially are alienated from the home school with regard to school life (e.g., assemblies) while being governed by the disciplinary policies of the school.
- Provide better outreach to students who could benefit from the program.
  - Most students agreed that there are other students who could benefit who are not being served because of lack of information regarding the program.
- Provide the opportunity for students who could pass the GED to take the test before the established spring testing.
  - One student said she is in her second year and would like to take the GED and exit the program.
- Apply the rules of the individual programs consistently and fairly.
  - One group of students said the rules are different for some students particularly with regard to discipline and participation in school life.

8. **What are your plans once you complete the program?**

Most students indicated that they have future plans which include:

- Further training (e.g., trade school, community college)
- Military service
- Employment

9. **How would you rate your overall level of satisfaction with the program?**

Students are satisfied with the program.

- One group of students expressed a lesser degree of satisfaction with the program at their school due to the inconsistency of rules for their program and their perceived alienation from the home school.
- Several groups have high satisfaction due to support and encouragement from the teacher.

10. **Based on other comments from students:**

A number of students did not appear to understand fully the requirements for participating in the graduation ceremony.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Retain the Employment Plus program as an alternative to the regular high school program for students who are at least seventeen years of age and two years behind their age peers.

2. Explore the possibility of (1) increasing job placement opportunities within the school division to facilitate the employment of students in all of the senior high schools, (2) under unique circumstances, offering students the opportunity to enroll in regular vocational courses that provide specific job skills (e.g., catering, computer training) as an alternative to the cooperative work experience, and (3) placing more responsibility with coordinators to assist students in obtaining employment (coordinators have two coordinating bells under the six-bell schedule and an extended contract in the summer).

3. Provide driver education for Employment Plus students to assist students in resolving transportation problems that hinder the cooperative work experience.

4. To serve more students, allow students to enter the Employment Plus program at the beginning of second semester with the option to continue in the summer or to re-enroll the following fall.

5. Consider offering on a semester format a separate, non-vocational GED Preparation program to accommodate students who do not require yearlong participation.

6. Reexamine the arrangement with the Center for Science and Technology for providing occupational/technical training to Employment Plus students.
   - Allow students to enter the program when they enter Employment Plus.
   - Develop a "work adjustment" program (e.g., safety rules) to prepare students who enter CCST vocational programs late.
   - Address attendance and behavior issues which hinder the success of students in the program.
   - Increase the contact between Employment Plus coordinators and the staff of the Center for Science and Technology.

7. Clarify the rules of the program for students in each school, and apply the rules consistently.

8. Clarify the policy regarding student participation in school life including the graduation ceremony. Standardize the policy among schools.

9. Revise the process for identifying the pool of students who initially apply for the Employment

Plus Program to ensure that all students who could benefit from the program (i.e., would qualify, are not likely to succeed in the regular program, and wish to participate) have the opportunity to apply.

- After each nine-week period, use the student data management system to generate a list of students in the school who are at least seventeen years of age, two years behind their age peers, and are failing two or more subjects.
- Establish a standard means of informing students on the list and their parents about the Employment Plus program.
- The practice of accepting referrals by teachers, counselors, coordinators, and self-referrals by students should be used in conjunction with the list of students to ensure that students who will benefit most from the program are selected for enrollment.

9. Integrate computer skills more fully into both the GED preparation and preemployability/employability skills components of the Employment Plus curriculum (e.g., teach students to use word processing software to prepare resumes). Establish a rotation schedule which allows students to use computers on a daily basis.

CHESAPEAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

SURVEY OF PRINCIPALS

SURVEY OF PRINCIPALS

PURPOSE OF THE SURVEYS: Surveys were sent in November 1997 to the six high school principals to gather information regarding the Employment Plus program, including (1) the applicant pool, (2) student selection criteria and process, (3) whether students fit the expected student profile, (4) whether all students who fit the profile and who would benefit from the program were enrolled, (5) whether the program includes the strategies recommended in educational literature for serving at-risk students, and (6) level of satisfaction with the program among principals. Five (5) high school principals responded for a return rate of eighty-three percent (83%).

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS: See Evaluation Proposal, page 31.

FINDINGS: See Survey of Principals, Chart 5, page 79.

1. With regard to the pool of students who initially are considered for the Employment Plus program (i.e., applicant pool), the majority of principals (60%) indicated that applicants include a limited number of students who fit the expected profile of being seventeen years old and two years behind.

2. All principals responded that the applicant pool from which Employment Plus students are selected is appropriate being neither too broad nor too narrow.

3. All principals responded that the criteria used to determine final eligibility of a student are a minimum score on the GED and the potential for cooperative work experience based on an interview with program staff.

4. The majority of principals (60%) indicated that the Employment Plus Coordinator determines the final eligibility of a student.

   One principal commented that a committee comprised of the Employment Plus coordinator, principal, assistant principal, and a guidance counselor determines final eligibility.

5. All principals responded that the criteria and the procedures for selecting students to enroll in the program are appropriate.

6. In the professional opinion of a high percentage of principals (80%), there are other students who could benefit from the program (i.e., would qualify for enrollment and wish to participate) who are not served each year.
   - Sixty percent (60%) of principals said between one and ten more students could benefit; twenty percent (20%) said between eleven and twenty more students could benefit.
   - Twenty percent (20%) said there were no more students who could benefit.

CHART 5
SURVEY OF PRINCIPALS

SURVEY QUESTION	RESPONSE		PERCENTAGES
1. Who makes up the pool of students who initially are considered for the Employment Plus Program (i.e., applicant pool)?	A.	All students who are seventeen years old and two years behind in school (e.g., students listed in a report of overage students)	40%
	B.	Certain students who are seventeen years old and two years behind (e.g.,only those who self-refer, who are referred by counselors, or who are referred by teachers).	60%
	C.	Other	0%
2. In your opinion, is the group of students from which the program draws	A.	Too broad	0%
	B.	Too narrow	0%
	C.	Correct	100%
3. What criteria are used to determine the final eligibility of a student for the Employment Plus Program?	A.	A minimum score on the GED Pretest	0%
	B.	A minimum score on the GED Pretest and the potential for cooperative work experience based on an interview with program staff	100%
	C.	Other	0%
4. Who determines the final eligibility of a student?	A.	Employment Plus Coordinator	60%
	B.	An eligibility committee	20%
	C.	Other	20%
5. In your opinion, are the criteria and the procedures for selecting students to enroll in the program appropriate?	A.	Yes	100%
	B.	No	0%
6. Based on your professional opinion, how many students who could benefit from the program (i.e., would qualify for enrollment and wish to participate) typically are **not** served each year?	A.	0	20%
	B.	1-10	60%
	C.	11-20	20%
	D.	21 or more	0%
7. What is your overall level of satisfaction with the program?	A.	Very satisfied	100%
	B.	Satisfied	0%
	C.	Not satisfied	0%

7. All principals responded that they are very satisfied with the Employment Plus program.

A principal commented that the program benefits the student, school, community, employers, and the labor market by providing an alternative to students who were not successful in the regular program.

CONCLUSIONS:

The following conclusions are based on the responses of principals:

1. The applicant pool does not consist of all students who could benefit from the Employment Plus program.
   - The majority of principals said the applicant pool is made up only of certain students who are seventeen years old and two years behind (i.e., only those who self-refer, who are referred by counselors, or who are referred by teachers).
   - A high percentage of principals said additional students who could benefit from the program are not served each year.
     - Sixty percent (60%) said from one to ten additional students who could benefit are not served; twenty percent (20%) said from eleven to twenty more students who could benefit are not served.

2. Selection criteria for determining final eligibility of a student for the program are the same among schools.
   - All principals agreed that the criteria include a minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest and the potential for cooperative work experience based on an interview with program staff.
   - Principals consider the criteria and procedures for selecting students to be appropriate.

3. In most schools the Employment Plus coordinator determines the final eligibility of a student.
   - In some schools an eligibility committee (e.g., coordinator, principal, guidance counselor) determines final eligibility.

4. Satisfaction with the Employment Plus program is high among high school principals.

5. Based on the responses of principals to the checklist of strategies recommended in educational literature for at-risk students, the Employment Plus program model offers many of the recommended strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Retain the Employment Plus program as an alternative to the regular high school program.
   - The program should continue to serve students who are at least seventeen years of age and two years behind their age peers.
   - Final eligibility requirements in all Employment Plus programs should include the current practice of:

(1) Obtaining an established minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest.
(2) Completing an interview with the Employment Plus coordinator in which the motivation to participate fully in GED Preparation and cooperative work experience or other vocational training is demonstrated.
(3) Obtaining parental support for the student while in the program to the extent possible.
(4) The current practice in which coordinators determine final eligibility with the approval of the principal should be modified to include a team approach.

- To serve more students who could benefit from the program, consider (1) offering a more flexible entry and exit policy and (2) determining at spring staffing the need for additional Employment Plus classes at some high schools.

2. Revise and standardize the process for identifying the pool of students who initially apply for the Employment Plus Program to ensure that all students who could benefit from the program (i.e., would qualify, are not likely to succeed in the regular program, and wish to participate) have the opportunity to apply.

- After each nine-week period, use the student data management system to identify students who are at least seventeen years of age, two years behind their age peers, and are failing two or more subjects.
- Establish a standard means of informing students on the list who could benefit from the program and their parents about the Employment Plus program.
- The practice of accepting referrals by teachers, counselors, coordinators, and self-referrals by students should be used in conjunction with a more formal process of identification to ensure that students who will benefit most from the program are selected for enrollment.
- Standardize and clarify the identification process among schools.

CHESAPEAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

SURVEY OF CURRENT EMPLOYERS AND CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TEACHERS

SURVEY OF CURRENT EMPLOYERS AND CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TEACHERS

PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY:

Surveys were mailed in December 1997 to forty-nine employers of current Employment Plus students and to four teachers of current students who attend the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology to determine their level of satisfaction. Nineteen (19) surveys were received for a return rate of thirty-six percent (36%).

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

Seventy-five percent of employers of current students and teachers of current students who attend the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology express satisfaction with the program.

FINDINGS (see Chart 6, page 84):

1. Approximately half the employers and teachers surveyed (53%) indicated this is the first year they have participated as an employer or teacher of students in the Employment Plus program.
   - The remainder said they have participated from two to six years.

2. Approximately half the employers and teachers (53%) indicated they currently employ or teach only one student.
   - The remainder said they employ or teach from two to six or more students.

3. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of respondents indicated there is regular contact with the Employment Plus Coordinators.

4. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of respondents indicated the amount of contact is sufficient.

5. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of respondents indicated they are satisfied (47%) or very satisfied (21%) with the job performance of students this year.

   One respondent said the Employment Plus student has been exceptional.

   A respondent who disagreed commented that their students are disruptive, uninterested, and have attendance problems.

   Another said the two students now employed are the worst of the students they have had over the years.

   A CCST teacher commented that he had four students at the beginning of the year but now has only one very unmotivated student left in the class.

6. Approximately half the respondents said the job performance of Employment Plus students is the same (47%) or better (6%) than the performance of their other employees or students.

CHART 6
SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS AND CENTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TEACHERS

SURVEY QUESTION	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGES
1. How many years have you participated as an employer/teacher of students in the Employment Plus program?	A. 1	53%
	B. 2-4	32%
	C. 4-6	11%
	D. Blank	4%
2. How many students from the Employment Plus program do you currently employ/teach?	A. 1	53%
	B. 2-5	32%
	C. 6 or more	5%
	D. Blank	10%
3. Is there regular contact with the Employment Plus Coordinators of the students you employ/teach?	A. Yes	79%
	B. No	21%
4. Is the amount of contact with the coordinator sufficient?	A. Yes	89%
	B. No	11%
5. What is your level of satisfaction with the job performance of students this year?	A. Very satisfied	21%
	B. Satisfied	47%
	C. Not Satisfied	32%
6. How does the job performance of Employment Plus students compare with the performance of your other employees/students? Performance is	A. The Same	47%
	B. Better	6%
	C. Not As Good	47%

- Forty-seven percent said the job performance is not as good.

One employer commented that Employment Plus students are excellent workers.

One respondent who believes job performance of Employment Plus students is not as good commented that students have no desire to learn; another said the job performance is not good due largely to lack of experience and maturity.

One employer said Employment Plus students in his office have created problems which is in contrast to his experiences with COE and ICT students over the past twenty years. This employer complained (1) that attendance is a major problem with students failing to show up or call if they are absent, (2) that most students do not have a driver's license, must depend on getting a ride to work, and frequently miss the ride, and (3) that students have the ability to learn a task but lack the ability to concentrate and the motivation to do a job well.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. This is the first year of participation in the Employment Plus program for the majority of employers and teachers surveyed.
   - The number of years of participation for the remainder varies from two to six years.

2. The majority of respondents employ or teach only one student from the Employment Plus program.
   - The remainder employ or teach from two to six or more students.

3. According to employers and teachers, there is regular contact with Employment Plus coordinators, and the amount of contact is sufficient.

4. The majority of employers and teachers surveyed are satisfied or very satisfied with the job performance of students in the 1997-98 program.
   - Employers and teachers are divided regarding how the job performance of Employment Plus students compares with the job performance of other employees and students. Approximately half said job performance is the same or better while the other half said job performance is not as good.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Retain the Employment Plus program as an alternative to the regular high school program for students who are at least seventeen years of age and two years behind their age peers.

2. Address the concerns of one-third of the teachers and employers who are not satisfied with the job performance of Employment Plus students.
   - Continue to emphasize the importance of regular attendance in the preemployability and employability skills curriculum component.
   - Hold students accountable for regular attendance in the cooperative work experience or vocational training (e.g., include the employer/vocational teacher evaluation in the

performance criteria for successfully completing the cooperative work experience/occupational and technical training component).

- Provide Employment Plus students with the opportunity to take driver education.
- Reexamine the arrangement with the Center for Science and Technology for occupational/technical training: (1) Address attendance and behavior issues which hinder the success of students, (2) develop a "work adjustment" program (e.g., safety rules) to prepare students who enter CCST vocational programs late, and (3) increase the contact between Employment Plus coordinators and the staff of the Center for Science and Technology.

CHESAPEAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

ANALYSIS OF ACHIEVEMENT DATA (1995-96 AND 1996-97)

ANALYSIS OF ACHIEVEMENT DATA (1995-96 AND 1996-97)

PURPOSE OF THE DATA COLLECTION:

To determine the success rate of the Employment Plus program, the number of students completing the program was studied. Information regarding the number of students in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 programs who obtained a GED Certificate and the number of students who successfully completed a cooperative work experience or an occupational/technical training program was collected. Students in the 1995-96 Employment Plus program who could be reached by telephone also were contacted during December 1997 and January 1998 to determine whether the former students were employed or in higher education two years after completion of the program, their level of satisfaction with the program, and whether they had suggestions for improving the program.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

1. Sixty-five percent of students who were in the program for at least 24 weeks and who took the GED examination obtained a GED Certificate.
2. Eighty percent of students who were in the program for at least 24 weeks successfully completed a cooperative work experience or an occupational/technical training program.
3. Eighty percent of students who successfully completed the program were employed or in higher education two years later.

FINDINGS (see Chart 7 and Chart 8, page 89):

1. Eighty students were enrolled in the 1995-96 Employment Plus program.
   - Forty-five students (56%) obtained the GED Certificate.
   - Twenty-three students (29%) had GED Pretest scores which were at least the minimum passing score (225) to obtain the GED before enrolling.
   - Thirty-nine students (49%) successfully completed the cooperative work experience.

2. Fifty-five of the eighty students (69%) attended the Employment Plus program at least 24 weeks.

   - Fifty-three of the eighty students (66%) were in the 1995-96 Employment Plus program at least 24 weeks and took the GED exam.
   - Forty-three of the fifty-three students (81%) who took the GED examination obtained a GED Certificate.
   - Sixteen of the fifty-five students (29%) who attended at least 24 weeks had GED Pretest scores which were at least the minimum passing score to obtain the GED before enrolling.

CHART 7
1995-1996 ACHIEVEMENT DATA

School	# of students		# of students who attended 24 weeks or more and took the GED Exam	# of students who received GED Certificate		# of students with GED Pretest scores above exam minimum before enrolling		# of students who successfully completed cooperative work experience	
	Attended 24 weeks or more	Attended fewer than 24 weeks		Attended 24 weeks or more	Attended fewer than 24 weeks	Attended 24 weeks or more	Attended fewer than 24 weeks	Attended 24 weeks or more	Attended fewer than 24 weeks
Great Bridge High	7	13	7	6	0	4	4	4	0
Deep Creek High	11	0	9	7	0	1	0	3	0
Indian River High	12	4	12	10	0	2	1	10	0
Oscar Smith High	19	2	19	16	0	6	1	16	0
Western Branch High	6	6	6	4	2	3	1	6	0
TOTALS	**55 (69%)**	**25 (31%)**	**53 (66%)**	**43 (81%)**	**2 (8%)**	**16 (29%)**	**7 (28%)**	**39 (71%)**	**0 (0%)**
	80 (100%)			**45 (56%)**		**23 (29%)**		**39 (49%)**	

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CHART 8
1996-1997 ACHIEVEMENT DATA

School	# of students		# of students who attended 24 weeks or more and took the GED Exam	# of students who received GED Certificate		# of students with GED Pretest scores above exam minimum before enrolling		# of students who successfully completed cooperative work experience	
	Attended 24 weeks or more	Attended fewer than 24 weeks		Attended 24 weeks or more	Attended fewer than 24 weeks	Attended 24 weeks or more	Attended fewer than 24 weeks	Attended 24 weeks or more	Attended fewer than 24 weeks
Great Bridge High	12	6	11	5	0	5	1	1	0
Deep Creek High	7	3	5	4	0	4	0	2	0
Indian River High	17	2	15	13	0	5	0	13	0
Oscar Smith High	15	5	15	8	1	2	1	15	0
Western Branch High	6	8	6	4	2	3	4	5	3
TOTALS	**57 (70%)**	**24 (30%)**	**52 (64%)**	**34 (65%)**	**3 (13%)**	**19 (33%)**	**6 (25%)**	**36 (63%)**	**3 (13%)**
	81 (100%)			**37 (46%)**		**25 (31%)**		**39 (48%)**	

- Thirty-nine of the fifty-five students (71%) who attended at least 24 weeks successfully completed a cooperative work experience or an occupational/technical training program.

3. Twenty-five of the eighty students (31%) in the 1995-96 Employment Plus program attended fewer than 24 weeks.
   - Two of the twenty-five students (8%) obtained the GED Certificate.
   - Seven of the twenty-five students (28%) who attended fewer than 24 weeks had GED Pretest scores which were at least the minimum passing score to obtain the GED before enrolling.
   - None of the students who attended fewer than twenty-four week successfully completed the cooperative work experience.

4. Eighty-one students were enrolled in the 1996-97 Employment Plus program.
   - Thirty-seven students (46%) obtained the GED Certificate.
   - Twenty-five students (31%) had GED Pretest scores which were at least the minimum passing score to obtain the GED before enrolling.
   - Thirty-nine students (48%) successfully completed the cooperative work experience.

5. Fifty-seven of the eighty-one students (70%) were in the 1996-97 Employment Plus program at least 24 weeks.
   - Fifty-two of the eighty-one students (64%) were in the program at least 24 weeks and took the GED exam.
   - Thirty-four of the fifty-two students (65%) who took the GED examination obtained a GED Certificate.
   - Nineteen of the fifty-seven students (33%) had GED Pretest scores which were at least the minimum passing score to obtain the GED before enrolling.
   - Thirty-six of the fifty-seven students (63%) who attended at least 24 weeks successfully completed a cooperative work experience or an occupational/technical training program.

6. Twenty-four of the eighty-one students (30%) in the 1996-97 program attended fewer than 24 weeks.
   - Three of the twenty-four students (13%) obtained the GED Certificate.
   - Six of the twenty-four students (25%) had GED Pretest scores which were at least the minimum passing score to obtain the GED before enrolling.
   - Three of the twenty-four students (13%) who attended fewer than 24 weeks successfully completed a cooperative work experience.

7. Of the fifty-five students who attended the 1995-96 Employment Plus program for at least 24 weeks, sixteen students (29%) could be reached by telephone.
   - Fourteen of the sixteen students (88%) are working and/or continuing their education.

- All students expressed satisfaction with the program and had no suggestions for improving the program based on their experiences.

A student commented that she entered the Employment Plus program because she simply did not fit into the regular program. Another student said the program helped him stay in school.

Another student commented that his teacher was excellent.

A student observed that other students could have benefitted from the program if space had been available at his school.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Approximately one-third of the students who initially enrolled in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 Employment Plus programs attended fewer than 24 weeks.

2. The number of students who obtained a GED Certificate was high for those who attended at least 24 weeks in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 Employment Plus programs.
   - Forty-three of the fifty-four students (81%) who were in the 1995-96 program at least 24 weeks and took the GED examination obtained the GED Certificate.
   - Thirty-four of the fifty-two students (65%) who were in the 1996-97 program at least 24 weeks and took the GED examination obtained the GED Certificate.

3. The number of students obtaining a GED Certificate dropped significantly for students attending fewer than 24 weeks in the two years studied.
   - Only two of the twenty-five students (8%) who attended the 1995-96 program fewer than 24 weeks obtained the GED Certificate.
   - Only three of the twenty-four students (13%) who attended the 1996-97 program fewer than 24 weeks obtained the GED Certificate.

4. The majority of students who attended the 1995-96 and 1996-97 programs at least 24 weeks successfully completed the cooperative work experience.
   - Approximately three-quarters of the fifty-five students (71%) who attended the 1995-96 program at least 24 weeks successfully completed the cooperative work experience or occupational/technical training.
   - Approximately two-thirds of the fifty-seven students (63%) who attended the 1996-97 program at least 24 weeks successfully completed the cooperative work experience or occupational/technical training.

5. The number of students completing the cooperative work experience dropped significantly for students attending fewer than 24 weeks in both programs.
   - None of the twenty-five students who attended the 1995-96 program fewer than 24 weeks successfully completed the cooperative work experience.
   - Only three of the twenty-four students (13%) who attended the 1996-97 program fewer than 24 weeks successfully completed the cooperative work experience.

6. Approximately one-third of the total number of students enrolled in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 programs had GED Pretest scores which were at least the minimum passing score (225) to obtain the GED before enrolling.

5. Based on former students from the 1995-96 program who could be reached, 88% were still employed or continuing their education two years later.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Retain the Employment Plus program as an alternative to the regular program for students who are at least seventeen years old and two years behind their age peers.

2. Address (a) the attrition rate (one-third of students) and (b) the fact that approximately one-third of the students in each of the programs for the two years studied had achieved a GED Pretest score which was at least the minimum passing score to obtain the GED before enrolling in the Employment Plus program.
   - Consider offering a separate, non-vocational GED preparation program on a semester basis (i.e., a program which models the semester format of the 4 X 4 block schedule) to accommodate students who do not require or desire a yearlong program.
   - Provide students who enroll for one semester with the option of re-enrolling for another semester if necessary.

3. To facilitate the employment of students from all of the senior high schools, explore the possibility of (a) increasing job placement opportunities within the school division (b) under unique circumstances, offering students the opportunity to enroll in regular vocational courses that provide specific job skills (e.g., catering, computer training) as an alternative to the cooperative work experience, and (c) placing more responsibility with coordinators to assist students in obtaining employment (coordinators have two coordinating bells under the six-bell schedule and an extended contract in the summer).

4. Provide driver education for Employment Plus students to assist students in resolving transportation problems that hinder the cooperative work experience.

5. Reexamine the arrangement with the Center for Science and Technology for providing occupational/technical training to Employment Plus students.
   - Allow students to enter the program when they enter Employment Plus.
   - Develop a "work adjustment" program (e.g., safety rules) to prepare students who enter CCST vocational programs late.
   - Address attendance and behavior issues which hinder the success of students in the program.
   - Increase the contact between Employment Plus coordinators and the staff of the Center for Science and Technology.

CHESAPEAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION REGARDING APPLICANT POOL, STUDENTS PRETESTED, AND STUDENTS ENROLLED

ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION REGARDING APPLICANT POOL, STUDENTS PRETESTED, AND STUDENTS ENROLLED

PURPOSE OF THE ANALYSIS:

(1) A list of all students in the division 17 years of age or older and two years behind their peers with at least one failure after the first grading period of the 1997-98 school year was generated from the Student Data Management system. The purpose of the list was to establish the size of an overall Employment Plus applicant pool that could be compared with the number of students pretested for the Employment Plus program.

(2) The number of students on the list who had two or more failures after the first grading period was used to determine if there was a sufficient pool of students to apply for entry into the Employment Plus program at the beginning of second semester.

(3) Information regarding the number of students actually pretested for the Employment Plus program was used to prepare a profile of pretested students.

(4) Information regarding students enrolled in the 1997-98 program was used to determine if students enrolled fit the expected profile (i.e., at least 17 years of age, two years behind age peers, a minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest).

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

1. Applicant pool includes all students at least 17 years of age and two years behind age peers.
2. Ninety-five percent of students enrolled fit the expected student profile (i.e., at least 17 years of age, two years behind age peers, a minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest)
3. All students who fit the profile and who would benefit from the program were enrolled.

FINDINGS (see Chart 9, page 95, Charts 10 and 11, page 96, and Chart 12, page 97):

1. A total of 781 students in the school division were at least 17 years of age, two years behind their age peers, and had one or more failures after the first grading period of the 1997-98 school year (see Chart 9).

2. A total of 54 students in the school division were at least 17 years of age, two years behind their age peers, and had two or more failures after the first grading period of the 1997-1998 school year (see Chart 9).

3. A total of 160 students were pretested in the six high schools for the 1997-98 Employment Plus program (see Chart 10).
   - Ninety-eight percent (157 students) were at least 17 years of age.
   - Grade levels of students pretested were as follows:
     - Twenty-nine percent (47 students) were ninth graders.
     - Sixty percent (95 students) were tenth graders.
     - Ten percent (16 students) were eleventh graders.
     - One percent (2 students) were twelfth graders.

CHART 9
ANALYSIS OF APPLICANT POOL
FIRST NINE-WEEK GRADING PERIOD (1997-98)

School	# Students 17 Years or Older and Two Years Behind Age Peers with One or More Failures	# Students 17 Years or Older and Two Years Behind Age Peers with Two or More Failures
Western Branch High	94	3
Deep Creek High	158	20
Great Bridge High	111	2
Oscar Smith High	157	18
Hickory High	111	4
Indian River High	150	7
TOTAL	**781**	**54**

CHART 10
PROFILE OF STUDENTS PRETESTED (1997-98)

School	#Students Pretested	Age of Students				Grade Level of Students				# Students 2 Years Behind Age Peers	GED Pretest Scores			
		#16 Years	#17 Years	#18 Years	#19 Years	#9th Graders	#10th Graders	#11th Graders	#12th Graders		# Students With Score of 225+	# Students With Score of 215-224	# Students With Score of 190-214	# Students With Score Below 190
Western Branch High	27	1	18	6	2	14	11	1	1	26	8	3	11	5
Deep Creek High	18	-	8	9	1	4	14	-	-	17*	9	2	2	5
Great Bridge High	18	-	11	7	-	6	8	4	-	17	10	2	5	1
Oscar Smith High	46	2	21	17	6	12	29	4	1	43	11	1	14	20
Hickory High	18	-	10	6	2	-	11	7	-	17	4	1	11	2
Indian River High	33	-	20	13	-	11	22	-	-	32*	8	6	11	8
TOTALS	**160**	**3**	**88**	**58**	**11**	**47**	**95**	**16**	**2**	**152***	**50**	**15**	**54**	**41**
PERCENTAGES		**2%**	**55%**	**36%**	**7%**	**29%**	**60%**	**10%**	**1%**	**95%**	**32%**	**9%**	**34%**	**25%**

*This information was not available for two students who took the GED Pretest

CHART 11
PROFILE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED (1997-98)

School	# Students Enrolled in Program	# Students Age 17+		# Students 2Years Behind Their Peers		# Students Scoring 190+ on GED Pretest	
		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Western Branch High School	17	17	0	17	0	17	0
Deep Creek High School	11	11	0	11	0	11	0
Great Bridge High School	9	9	0	9	0	9	0
Oscar Smith High School	23	23	0	22	1	19	4
Hickory High School	13	13	0	13	0	13	0
Indian River High School	16	16	0	16	0	16	0
TOTALS	**89**	**89**	**0**	**88**	**1**	**85**	**4**
PERCENTAGES		**100%**	**0%**	**99%**	**1%**	**96%**	**4%**

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CHART 12
ANALYSIS OF GED PRETEST SCORES
FOR ALL STUDENTS PRETESTED (1997-98)

SCHOOL	STUDENTS ENROLLED		STUDENTS NOT ENROLLED	
	# Students	# Students with Pre-GED Test Scores of 225+	# Students	# Students with Pre-GED Test Scores of 225+
Western Branch High	17	8	10	0
Deep Creek High	11	8	7	1
Great Bridge High	9	4	9	6
Oscar Smith High	23	8	23	3
Hickory High	13	3	5	1
Indian River High	16	2	17	6
TOTAL	**89**	**33 (37%)**	**71**	**17 (24%)**

- Ninety-five percent of pretested students (152) were at least two years behind their age peers.
- An analysis of GED Pretest scores of the 160 students revealed the following:
  - Thirty-two percent (50 students) had achieved a GED Pretest score which was at least the minimum passing score (225) to obtain the GED before enrolling in the program.
  - Nine percent (15 students) scored between 215 and 224.
  - Thirty-four percent (54 students) scored between 190 and 214.
  - Twenty-five percent (41 students) scored below 190.

4. Fifty-six percent of the 160 students pretested (89) were enrolled in the 1997-98 Employment Plus program (see Chart 11).
   - One hundred percent of the 89 students who enrolled were 17 years of age or older.
   - Ninety-nine percent of the students (88) who enrolled were two years behind their age peers.
   - Ninety-six percent of the students (85) scored 190 or higher on the GED Pretest.
   - Thirty-seven percent of students (33) had achieved a GED Pretest score which was at least the minimum passing score to obtain the GED before enrolling (see Chart 12).

5. Of the 71 pretested students who did not enroll in the 1997-98 program, twenty-four percent (17) had achieved a GED Pretest score which was at least the minimum passing score to obtain the GED before enrolling in the program (see Chart 12). Of the seventeen students, fifteen were not on the list of students generated after the first grading period of the 1997-98 school year and, therefore, have left Chesapeake Public Schools possibly to drop out.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Based on a gross screening measure, it appears that there are a large number of regular education students in the school division who potentially could benefit from the Employment Plus program. Currently, a small percentage of these potential students take the GED Pretest to apply for the program.
   - A total of 781 students were 17 years of age, two years behind their age peers, and had one or more failures after the first grading period of 1997-98.
   - A total of 160 students were pretested for the 1997-98 Employment Plus program.

   Approximately 20% of the hypothetical pool of regular education students who potentially could have benefitted from the program were pretested.

2. It appears that a sufficient pool of students was available in some schools to apply to enter the Employment Plus program at second semester.
   - After the first grading period of the 1997-98 school year, 54 students were identified as being at least 17 years of age, two years behind their age peers, and failing two or more subjects.

- The second semester applicant pool appears to be relatively high at Deep Creek High and Oscar Smith High schools but is low at Hickory High, Great Bridge High, Indian River High, and Western Branch High schools.

3. The following profile of students who were pretested for the 1997-98 Employment Plus program emerged from this analysis:
   - Nearly all of the pretested students were at least 17 years of age (98%) and two years behind their age peers (95%).
   - A high percentage of pretested students (90%) were ninth and tenth graders.
   - Approximately one-third of pretested students (32%) had achieved a GED Pretest score which was at least the minimum passing score (225) to obtain the GED before enrolling in the program. An additional nine percent of pretested students scored between 215 and 224.

4. A quarter of the students who did not enroll in the 1997-98 Employment Plus program had achieved a GED Pretest score which was at least the minimum passing score (225) to obtain the GED.

5. At least ninety-five percent of students enrolled in the 1997-98 Employment Plus program fit the expected student profile.
   - One hundred percent were at least 17 years of age.
   - Ninety-nine percent were at least two years behind their age peers.
   - Ninety-six percent had a score of 190 or better on the GED Pretest.

6. The program at three schools is under enrolled (i.e., Deep Creek High, Great Bridge High, and Hickory High schools) and over enrolled at three schools (i.e., Western Branch High, Oscar Smith High, and Indian River High schools).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Retain the Employment Plus program as an alternative to the regular high school program.
   - Continue to serve students who are at least seventeen years of age and two years behind their age peers.
   - Include the current practice of requiring an established minimum score of 190 on the GED Pretest in the final eligibility requirements for all Employment Plus programs.
   - Consider a more flexible entry and exit policy for the program:
     (1) To serve more students.
     (2) To accommodate students who are identified at mid-year.
     (3) To assist with the enrollment imbalance at the six schools.

2. Revise and standardize the process for identifying the pool of students who initially apply for the Employment Plus program to ensure that all students who could benefit from the program (i.e., would qualify, are not likely to succeed in the regular program, and wish to participate) have the opportunity to apply.
   - Establish a schoolwide "safety net" screening team chaired by a regular guidance counselor and comprised of the vocational counselor, an administrator, and the Employment Plus coordinator.
   - After each nine-week period, the screening team should use the student data management system to identify students who are at least seventeen years of age, two years behind their age peers, and are failing two or more subjects.
   - Once an initial pool of students is identified, the screening team should study student profiles and recommendations from other school personnel to identify a group of students (who could benefit most from the program) to take the GED Pretest.

3. Address over time the imbalance of enrollments and increase efficiency in the Employment Plus program in the six high schools by examining the feasibility of shifting the entire Employment Plus program to the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology where (a) more students could be served, (b) a better balance in class size could be achieved, (c) vocational programs are accessible, (d) transportation is available, (e) driver education is feasible, and (f) ties to the home school could be maintained.

4. Consider offering on a semester format a separate, non-vocational GED preparation program that is approved by the Virginia Department of Education at the Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology :
   - To address the fact that presently students in the regular program who do not need or desire a yearlong program must formally drop out of school to enroll in an adult GED preparation program.

CHESAPEAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

COMPARISON OF THE EMPLOYMENT PLUS PROGRAM MODEL WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE

COMPARISON OF THE EMPLOYMENT PLUS PROGRAM MODEL WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE FOR PROGRAMS SERVING AT-RISK STUDENTS

PURPOSE OF THE ANALYSIS: High school principals, Employment Plus coordinators, vocational counselors, and students were asked to respond to a checklist of strategies recommended in educational literature as effective for programs that serve at-risk students. Respondents checked whether the strategies recommended were used in the Employment Plus program. Principals completed the checklist as a part of the Survey of Principals. Coordinators and vocational counselors completed the checklist after the group interviews with the Program Evaluation Team. A member of the Program Evaluation Team visited Employment Plus classrooms to administer the checklist to students.

PERFORMANCE CRITERION FOR SUCCESS: The Employment Plus program includes 95% of the items on a checklist of strategies recommended in educational literature for programs that serve at-risk students.

FINDINGS: See Chart 13, page 103, for a summary of positive responses to the checklist and Charts 14, 15, 16, and 17, pages 104-107) for the responses of each group. See Appendix 3, page 127, for student comments.

CONCLUSIONS:

Based upon the responses of principals, coordinators, vocational counselors, and students, it appears that the Employment Plus program offers to some extent 95% of the strategies recommended in educational literature.

1. There was only one strategy that all groups indicated is not used in the Employment Plus program. The Employment Plus program apparently does not have a volunteer mentoring component.
   - The majority of principals, coordinators, and students agreed that this strategy is not used in the program. Half of the vocational counselors agreed and the remainder said they have no knowledge regarding this strategy.

2. With regard to five other strategies, responses of the four groups varied:
   - Only 64% of students indicated that the program provides computer-assisted instruction. All principals, coordinators, and counselors indicated computer-assisted instruction is provided.
   - It appears that the linkage between the guidance department and the Employment Plus program should be strengthened.

CHART 13
CHECKLIST OF STRATEGIES - SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM ALL GROUPS

		PERCENTAGE RESPONDING YES			
		Principals	Coordinators	Vocational Counselors	Students
The Employment Plus Program curriculum:					
1.	Is based on the four core subject areas (i.e., English, math, science, social studies)	100%	100%	84%	98%
2.	Is a functional curriculum offering: Study skills	80%	60%	84%	100%
	Living skills	100%	80%	100%	75%
	Social skills	80%	80%	100%	88%
	Cooperative work experience	100%	80%	100%	98%
Instruction in the Employment Plus Program:					
3.	Teaches problem-solving skills	*	100%	84%	86%
4.	Provides computer-assisted learning	100%	100%	100%	64%
5.	Provides team learning experiences (e.g. peer tutoring, cooperative learning)	*	100%	84%	88%
6.	Provides modeling of appropriate personal interaction skills by teachers	*	100%	100%	86%
7.	Provides alternative assessments (e.g., student contracts, incentives based on work/study performance)	80%	100%	84%	83%
8.	Includes high expectations for academic work	100%	100%	84%	76%
The support services and resource personnel component of the Employment Plus Program:					
9.	Includes a strong guidance linkage (e.g., individual counseling)	100%	100%	100%	49%
10.	Provides a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult staff member	100%	100%	100%	59%
11.	Includes a volunteer mentoring component	0%	0%	0%	25%
12.	Includes a case management component where appropriate (e.g., support for students on probation)	80%	100%	67%	25%
13.	Includes a career education component (e.g., preemployability and employability skills training)	100%	100%	100%	92%
14.	Provides linkages with business and industry	100%	100%	84%	85%
15.	Integrates Employment Plus services with the services of community agencies	40%	100%	16%	22%
16.	Encourages parental involvement	100%	100%	84%	69%
With regard to the school environment, the Employment Plus Program:					
17.	Promotes a positive feeling about school	*	80%	100%	85%
18.	Values unique strengths and abilities	*	100%	67%	81%
19.	Has a small class size	100%	100%	100%	86%
20.	Has a strong administrative commitment on the building level	100%	100%	100%	63%
21.	Provides an alternative crediting program (e.g., GED Preparation)	100%	100%	100%	97%
22.	Involves students in community service projects	*	80%	0%	24%
23.	Provides opportunities for acceleration (i.e., meeting curriculum goals at a faster pace)	100%	100%	34%	85%
24.	Offers flexible entry and exit during the school year	80%	80%	33%	66%

*Principals were not asked to respond to this question.

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CHART 14
CHECKLIST OF STRATEGIES - SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM PRINCIPALS

		PERCENTAGE		
		YES	NO	NO KNOWLEDGE
The Employment Plus Program curriculum:				
1.	Is based on the four core subject areas (i.e., English, math, science, social studies)	100%	0%	0%
2.	Is a functional curriculum offering: Study skills	80%	0%	20%
	Living skills	100%	0%	0%
	Social skills	80%	0%	20%
	Cooperative work experience	100%	0%	0%
Instruction in the Employment Plus Program:				
3.	Provides computer-assisted learning	100%	0%	0%
4.	Provides alternative assessments (e.g., student contracts, incentives based on work/study performance)	80%	0%	20%
5.	Includes high expectations for academic work	100%	0%	0%
The support services and resource personnel component of the Employment Plus Program:				
6.	Includes a strong guidance linkage (e.g., individual counseling)	100%	0%	0%
7.	Provides a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult staff member	100%	0%	0%
8.	Includes a volunteer mentoring component	0%	80%	20%
9.	Includes a case management component where appropriate (e.g., support for students on probation)	80%	20%	0%
10.	Includes a career education component (e.g., preemployability and employability skills training)	100%	0%	0%
11.	Provides linkages with business and industry	100%	0%	0%
12.	Integrates Employment Plus services with the services of community agencies	40%	40%	20%
13.	Encourages parental involvement	100%	0%	0%
With regard to the school environment, the Employment Plus Program:				
14.	Has a small class size	100%	0%	0%
15.	Has a strong administrative commitment on the building level	100%	0%	0%
16.	Provides an alternative crediting program (e.g., GED Preparation)	100%	0%	0%
17.	Provides opportunities for acceleration (i.e., meeting curriculum goals at a faster pace)	100%	0%	0%
18.	Offers flexible entry and exit during the school year	80%	20%	0%

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CHART 15
CHECKLIST OF STRATEGIES - SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM EMPLOYMENT PLUS COORDINATORS

		PERCENTAGE		
		YES	NO	NO KNOWLEDGE
The Employment Plus Program curriculum:				
1.	Is based on the four core subject areas (i.e., English, math, science, social studies)	100%	0%	0%
2.	Is a functional curriculum offering: Study skills	60%	20%	20%
	Living skills	80%	0%	20%
	Social skills	80%	0%	20%
	Cooperative work experience	80%	0%	20%
Instruction *in* the Employment Plus Program:				
3.	Teaches problem-solving skills	100%	0%	0%
4.	Provides computer-assisted learning	100%	0%	0%
5.	Provides team learning experiences (e.g. peer tutoring, cooperative learning)	100%	0%	0%
6.	Provides modeling of appropriate personal interaction skills by teachers	100%	0%	0%
7.	Provides alternative assessments (e.g., student contracts, incentives based on work/study performance)	100%	0%	0%
8.	Includes high expectations for academic work	100%	0%	0%
The support services and resource personnel component of the Employment Plus Program:				
9.	Includes a strong guidance linkage (e.g., individual counseling)	100%	0%	0%
10.	Provides a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult staff member	100%	0%	0%
11.	Includes a volunteer mentoring component	0%	100%	0%
12.	Includes a case management component where appropriate (e.g., support for students on probation)	100%	0%	0%
13.	Includes a career education component (e.g., preemployability and employability skills training)	100%	0%	0%
14.	Provides linkages with business and industry	100%	0%	0%
15.	Integrates Employment Plus services with the services of community agencies	100%	0%	0%
16.	Encourages parental involvement	100%	0%	0%
With regard to the school environment, the Employment Plus Program:				
17.	Promotes a positive feeling about school	80%	0%	20%
18.	Values unique strengths and abilities	100%	0%	0%
19.	Has a small class size	100%	0%	0%
20.	Has a strong administrative commitment on the building level	100%	0%	0%
21.	Provides an alternative crediting program (e.g., GED Preparation)	100%	0%	0%
22.	Involves students in community service projects	80%	20%	0%
23.	Provides opportunities for acceleration (i.e., meeting curriculum goals at a faster pace)	100%	0%	0%
24.	Offers flexible entry and exit during the school year	80%	20%	0%

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CHART 16

CHECKLIST OF STRATEGIES - SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM VOCATIONAL COUNSELORS

		PERCENTAGE		
		YES	NO	NO KNOWLEDGE
The Employment Plus Program curriculum:				
1.	Is based on the four core subject areas (i.e., English, math, science, social studies)	84%	16%	0%
2.	Is a functional curriculum offering: Study skills	84%	16%	0%
	Living skills	100%	0%	0%
	Social skills	100%	0%	0%
	Cooperative work experience	100%	0%	0%
Instruction in the Employment Plus Program:				
3.	Teaches problem-solving skills	84%	0%	16%
4.	Provides computer-assisted learning	100%	0%	0%
5.	Provides team learning experiences (e.g. , peer tutoring, cooperative learning)	84%	0%	16%
6.	Provides modeling of appropriate personal interaction skills by teachers	100%	0%	0%
7.	Provides alternative assessments (e.g., student contracts, incentives based on work/study performance)	84%	0%	16%
8.	Includes high expectations for academic work	84%	16%	0%
The support services and resource personnel component of the Employment Plus Program:				
9.	Includes a strong guidance linkage (e.g., individual counseling)	100%	0%	0%
10.	Provides a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult staff member	100%	0%	0%
11.	Includes a volunteer mentoring component	0%	50%	50%
12.	Includes a case management component where appropriate (e.g., support for students on probation)	67%	17%	16%
13.	Includes a career education component (e.g., preemployability and employability skills training)	100%	0%	0%
14.	Provides linkages with business and industry	84%	0%	16%
15.	Integrates Employment Plus services with the services of community agencies	16%	34%	50%
16.	Encourages parental involvement	84%	16%	0%
With regard to the school environment, the Employment Plus Program:				
17.	Promotes a positive feeling about school	100%	0%	0%
18.	Values unique strengths and abilities	67%	0%	33%
19.	Has a small class size	100%	0%	0%
20.	Has a strong administrative commitment on the building level	100%	0%	0%
21.	Provides an alternative crediting program (e.g., GED Preparation)	100%	0%	0%
22.	Involves students in community service projects	0%	33%	67%
23.	Provides opportunities for acceleration (i.e., meeting curriculum goals at a faster pace)	34%	50%	16%
24.	Offers flexible entry and exit during the school year	33%	67%	0%

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CHART 17
CHECKLIST OF STRATEGIES - SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM STUDENTS

	PERCENTAGE			
	YES	NO	NO KNOWLEDGE	BLANK
The Employment Plus Program curriculum:				
1. Is based on the four core subject areas (i.e., English, math, science, social studies)	98%	-	2%	-
2. Is a functional curriculum offering: Study skills	100%	-	-	-
Living skills	75%	15%	10%	-
Social skills	88%	8%	4%	-
Cooperative work experience	98%	2%	-	-
Instruction in the Employment Plus Program:				
3. Teaches problem-solving skills	86%	8%	6%	-
4. Provides computer-assisted learning	64%	29%	7%	-
5. Provides team learning experiences (e.g. peer tutoring, cooperative learning)	88%	7%	5%	-
6. Provides modeling of appropriate personal interaction skills by teachers	86%	10%	4%	-
7. Provides alternative assessments (e.g., student contracts, incentives based on work/study performance)	83%	12%	5%	-
8. Includes high expectations for academic work	76%	20%	4%	-
The support services and resource personnel component of the Employment Plus Program:				
9. Includes a strong guidance linkage (e.g., individual counseling)	49%	29%	22%	-
10. Provides a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult staff member	59%	31%	10%	-
11. Includes a volunteer mentoring component	25%	56%	19%	-
12. Includes a case management component where appropriate (e.g., support for students on probation)	25%	17%	58%	-
13. Includes a career education component (e.g., preemployability and employability skills training)	92%	5%	3%	-
14. Provides linkages with business and industry	85%	7%	8%	-
15. Integrates Employment Plus services with the services of community agencies	22%	36%	41%	1%
16. Encourages parental involvement	69%	24%	7%	-
With regard to the school environment, the Employment Plus Program:				
17. Promotes a positive feeling about school	85%	14%	1%	-
18. Values unique strengths and abilities	81%	12%	7%	-
19. Has a small class size	86%	12%	2%	-
20. Has a strong administrative commitment on the building level	63%	19%	18%	-
21. Provides an alternative crediting program (e.g., GED Preparation)	97%	3%	-	-
22. Involves students in community service projects	24%	39%	37%	-
23. Provides opportunities for acceleration (i.e., meeting curriculum goals at a faster pace)	85%	8%	5%	2%
24. Offers flexible entry and exit during the school year	66%	17%	14%	3%

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- Only 49% of students indicated the linkage is strong. All principals, coordinators, and counselors responded that there is a strong guidance linkage with the program.
- Only 59% of students indicated the program provides a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult staff member. All principals, coordinators, and counselors said this strategy is provided.
- A significant percentage of vocational counselors indicated that they have no knowledge of the following aspects of the Employment Plus program:
  - Mentoring (50% no knowledge)
  - Integration of Employment Plus services with community services (50% no knowledge)
  - Valuing unique strengths and weaknesses (33% no knowledge)
  - Student involvement in community services projects (67% no knowledge)

- It appears that the integration of Employment Plus services with the services of the community is minimal.
  - High percentages of students and vocational counselors and the majority of principals responded that services are not integrated or that they have no knowledge in this area.
  - All coordinators responded that there is an integration of services.

- It appears that involvement of Employment Plus students in community service projects is minimal.
  - High percentages of students and vocational counselors responded that there is no involvement or that they have no knowledge in this area.
  - A high percentage of coordinators indicated that students are involved in community service projects.

- The majority of students have no knowledge as to whether a case management component is included in the program. This is likely due to the fact that only those students on probation are informed of the support service.
  - High percentages of principals and coordinators and the majority of vocational counselors indicated there is a case management component in the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Continue to offer the strategies which educational literature recommends for programs that serve at-risk youth in the Employment Plus program. With regard to the strategies which groups indicated were not available or limited in the program:

- Increase computer literacy instruction (e.g., using the computer to prepare resumes).

- Formalize a volunteer mentoring component for each student in the Employment Plus program.
- Clarify the importance of the role of the vocational counselor and other members of the guidance department in providing ongoing support to Employment Plus students in order to strengthen the linkage between the student and the school.
- Provide information regarding community services that would be beneficial to Employment Plus students (e.g., social services).
- Increase parental involvement opportunities (e.g., provide periodic information on the student's progress toward obtaining the GED at all schools)
- Explore the possibility of involving Employment Plus students in age-appropriate community service projects that are structured to mirror the workplace as part of the cooperative work experience component.
- Clarify entry and exit policies for the program to all groups involved. To increase flexibility regarding entry and exit, allow students to enter Employment Plus at the beginning of second semester with the option to continue in the summer or to re-enroll the following fall.

CHESAPEAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

ANALYSIS OF COST DATA

ANALYSIS OF COST DATA

PURPOSE OF THE DATA COLLECTION:

Information was obtained from the Office of Budget to compare the per pupil cost of the Employment Plus program with the per pupil cost of the regular high school program.

PERFORMANCE CRITERION FOR SUCCESS:

The cost of enrolling a student in the Employment Plus program is reasonable when compared with the cost of serving a student in the regular high school program.

FINDINGS (see Chart 18, page 112):

1. The budgeted per pupil cost for all 1997-98 K-12 programs is $5,848.
2. The estimated per pupil cost for the 1997-98 Employment Plus program is $5,561.
3. The per pupil cost of serving students in the Employment Plus program is $287 less than the per pupil cost of serving students in all K-12 programs.

CONCLUSION:

The cost of enrolling a student in the Employment Plus program is reasonable when compared with the cost of serving students in all K-12 programs.

- The cost of serving a student in the Employment Plus program is 95% of the cost of serving students in all K-12 programs.

RECOMMENDATION:

Retain the Employment Plus program as an alternative to the regular high school program.

- The program should continue to serve students who are at least seventeen year of age and two years behind their age peers.

CHART 18
COMPARISON OF PER PUPIL COST FOR EMPLOYMENT PLUS PROGRAM WITH PER PUPIL COST FOR ALL K-12 PROGRAMS (1997-98)

Budgeted Per Pupil Cost for All K-12 Programs	Estimated Per Pupil Cost for Employment Plus Program*	Difference in Per Pupil Cost	Percentage Difference
$5,848	$5,561	$287	95%

*Instructional cost for Employment Plus program	$3,411
Non-instructional cost for all programs, including Employment Plus	2,150
	$5,561

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO THE STUDY:

CONTACTS WITH OTHER SCHOOL DIVISIONS

CONTACTS WITH OTHER SCHOOL DIVISIONS

PURPOSE OF THE CONTACTS:

Eight school divisions in the state were contacted in November and December 1997 to determine if alternative programs similar to the Employment Plus program are offered to overage students.

FINDINGS: See Chart 19, pages 115 and 116 and Appendix 1, page 119.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. **GED preparation is offered as an alternative to the traditional diploma program in all the school divisions contacted.**
   - All of the eight school divisions contacted offer some form of GED preparation to overage students.
   - Three school divisions offer high school credit programs along with GED preparation.

2. **All school divisions contacted offer the GED preparation program in an offsite location.**
   - This differs from Chesapeake's Employment Plus program which is offered in every high school.

3. **Most of the school divisions contacted have offered their GED preparation programs at least three years.**

4. **Cooperative work experience is not a requirement in most of the school divisions contacted.**
   - Two school divisions require a cooperative work component.
   - One school division requires students to attend vocational classes in the afternoon.
   - All other school divisions have some type of vocational component that is available to students but not required.

5. **Most school divisions provide flexibility in scheduling GED Preparation.**
   - Five school divisions offer both morning and afternoon or evening GED preparation programs.
   - One school divisions offers only an evening GED preparation program.

6. **All school divisions contacted serve students who are behind their age peers.**
   - Age limits vary among the school divisions contacted as does other criteria for acceptance (e.g., students with discipline problems are served in some programs and not in others).

CHART 19
SUMMARY OF CONTACTS WITH OTHER SCHOOL DIVISIONS

	Type of program	Location	How long program has been offered	Cooperative work component	Organization of instructional day	Student selection	How many students served	Entry/exit policy during the year	Success rate of program	Other comments
Chesapeake	Employment Plus offering GED preparation	Programs in all six high schools	In its fifth year	Required	GED prep program in morning; cooperative work experience in afternoon	Students at least 17 and two years behind; minimum score on GED Pretest; interview with coordinator	Approximately 85 students	Most students enter by November 30	To be determined in the evaluation	Vocational training instead of cooperative work experiences for some students
Virginia Beach	Open Campus offering GED preparation or high school credit Adult Learning Center offering GED preparation	Offsite in one high school Offsite at the Adult Learning Center	Open Campus in its eighth year Adult Learning Center program in its first year	Available but not required	Open Campus offers an evening GED prep program Adult Learning Center program offers a morning GED prep program	Open Campus serves overage students requiring an evening program Adult Learning Center serves students over 18 and two years behind who are recommended by School Board (discipline problems) or referred by schools (acad problems)	Very few students in the GED program at the Open Campus Approximately 10 students in the Adult Learning Center program	Students enter/exit the Open Campus program at designated times An open entry/exit policy is offered to the extent possible at the Adult Learning Center	Very few students opt for GED prep at the Open Campus Adult Learning Center program new and still being refined	Adult Learning Center staff would like more opportunities for students to participate in cooperative work experience
Norfolk	Norfolk Preparatory High School offering GED preparation or high school credit	Offsite in an alternative school	In its third year	Not required	An evening GED prep program	Students at least 17 and behind age peers referred from the Norfolk high schools	Approximately 230 students (GED prep and high school credit)	Students enter/exit the program at designated times	Students have reported success after completing the program	Students with discipline problems attend a separate alternative school
Portsmouth	Excel Program offering GED preparation or high school credit	One high school site for all students in the division	In its third year	Available but not required	Morning and evening GED prep programs (Monday - Thursday)	Overage students at least 16 but under 20 without discipline problems	Approximately 300 students (GED prep and high school credit	Students enter/exit the program at designated times	No achievement data available	Transportation not provided; no vocational component
Hampton	GED preparation or job readiness training	Offsite in an alternative school	In its first year	Required	Morning and evening GED prep programs	Students at least 17 and two years behind who are making slow academic progress or disrupting school	Approximately 100 students (25 slots for four high schools)	Open entry and exit	No achievement data available	Students do not return to home schools; certificate of completion to those who work solely on job readiness skills; outside agency responsible for job readiness and job placement; goal is to get a good job for every student by end of year; counseling with parents before placement

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CHART 19 (continued)

	Type of program	Location	How long program has been offered	Cooperative work component	Organization of instructional day	Student selection	How many students served	Entry/exit policy during the year	Success rate of program	Other comments
Newport News	Jackson Academy offering GED preparation Community center program offering GED Preparation	Offsite in an alternative school Offsite in a community center	Jackson Academy in its third year Community Center in its first year	Offers job-seeking skills only	Morning and evening GED prep programs	Students with attendance and academic problems	Approxi-mately 40 students	Open entry and exit	Most students complete the GED programs	Emphasis on how to find a job rather than employment while in the program
Suffolk	ACE (serves students in Suffolk and Isle of Wight) offering GED preparation	Offsite in the Vocational Technical Center	In its third year	A goal of the program	GED Prep in morning; vocational program in afternoon	Students at least 17 or older, two years behind, with five or fewer credits or who have not passed LPT; referrals by teachers, court, parents	Approxi-mately 40 students	Open entry and exit	No achievement data available	Population of at-risk students difficult to place in employment Goal is to get all students enrolled a GED regardless of GED placement scores
Henrico	Project YES offering GED preparation	Offsite with the Technical Center	In its sixth year	Required	Morning and evening GED prep programs	Students at least 17 and behind age peers; pretesting to determine skill level	Approxi-mately 40 students	Open entry and exit	Successful	Most important component is a flexible staff
Chesterfield	Regional GED program offering GED preparation	One high school site for all students in the division	In its third year	Available but not required	Morning GED prep program	Overage students who demonstrate potential for obtaining a GED on a pretest are referred from the high schools	Approxi-mately 18 students currently enrolled (47 total last year)	Open entry and exit	Successful	Computer-assisted instruction offered; main goal is to assist students in getting the GED

7. **The number of students served in the eight school divisions varies depending on the type of program offered.**
   - In school divisions serving a large number of students (i.e., 200 to 300 students), both GED preparation and high school credit courses are offered.

8. **All of the school divisions contacted offer more than one entry and exit point in their programs.**
   - Six school divisions offer programs which allow flexible entry and exit for students throughout the year.

9. **No achievement data was available from the school divisions contacted.**
   - Several school division contacts indicated that their programs have been successful.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Retain the Employment Plus program as an alternative to the regular high school program.
   - The program should continue to serve students who are at least seventeen years of age and two years behind their age peers.

2. Retain GED preparation as part of the overall senior high school program so that students are not required to drop out prior to enrolling in a GED preparation program.

3. Explore the possibility of offering on a semester format a separate GED preparation program for students who are at risk for dropping out of the regular program but who do not desire or require a yearlong program.
   - Consider providing opportunities for GED preparation to high school students who require afternoon or evening programs.
   - Consider providing a regional program with vocational training options at an offsite location (e.g., the Center for Science and Technology).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1
CONTACTS WITH OTHER SCHOOL DIVISIONS

Virginia Beach
Conversation with Dr. Curran, Coordinator of Alternative Education
December 1997

1. **Do you have a program similar to the Employment Plus Program (i.e., overage students, GED or other alternative to the diploma program, students counted in ADM)?**
   - Virginia Beach has the Open Campus evening program which offers high school credit and GED Preparation.
   - Virginia Beach recently began a program with the Adult Learning Center to provide GED Preparation to students who are under 18 and two years behind their age peers and who require a day program. Students are counted in average daily membership as students in an alternative program.

2. **Where is the program located?**
   - The Open Campus program is located in one high school.
   - The program being offered through adult education is offsite at the Adult Learning Center.

3. **How long has the program been in operation?**
   - The Open Campus program is in its eighth year.
   - The program at the Adult Learning Center is a new program.

4. **Does the program include a cooperative work component?**
   - Some opportunities are available in both programs, but it is not a requirement.

5. **How is the instructional day organized?**
   - The Open Campus program is an evening program.
   - The program at the Adult Learning Center will offer as much flexibility as possible in the GED Preparation program.

6. **How are students selected?**
   - Students who withdraw from the regular program may enroll in the Open Campus evening program.
   - Students with discipline problems are referred to the GED Preparation program at the Adult Learning Center by the School Board; students who are failing four or five subjects are referred to the program from the high schools.

7. **How many students are enrolled currently? What is the policy regarding entry and exit?**
   - Very few students are enrolled in GED Preparation at the Open Campus Program.
   - The new Adult Learning Center program currently has ten or eleven students; efforts to garner greater support for the program are currently under way .

8. **What is the success rate of the program?**
   - The Adult Learning Center GED Preparation program needs refining to keep students in the program.
   - Most students in the Open Campus program choose the high school credit option rather than GED Preparation.

9. **Other comments:**
   - Administrators at the Adult Learning Center would like to offer students who enter from the high schools more opportunities with regard to the work component of the program.

Norfolk
Conversation with Jackie Moore, Principal of the Norfolk Preparatory High School
November 1997

1. **Do you have a program similar to the Employment Plus Program (i.e., overage students, GED or other alternative to the diploma program, students counted in ADM)?**
   - Norfolk has a program which is based on the open campus model called the Norfolk Preparatory High School. Students are at least seventeen years of age and behind their age peers and are offered high school credit or GED preparation.

2. **Where is the program located?**
   - The program is located off site from the regular high schools at the Madison Career Center on Hampton and 37th Street.

3. **How long has the program been in operation?**
   - The program is in its third year.

4. **Does the program include a cooperative work component?**
   - This is not a requirement but is available.

5. **How is the instructional day organized?**
   - Norfolk Preparatory is an evening program in which students may elect to work toward a high school diploma or the GED.

6. **How are students selected?**
   - Students are referred from the Norfolk high schools.
   - The Tests of Adult Basic Education are administered once students are enrolled.

7. **How many students are enrolled currently? What is the policy regarding entry and exit?**
   - Approximately 230 students currently attend the program.
   - Students enter and exit at designated intervals.

8. **What is the success rate of the program?**
   - Students have returned to report they were successful in obtaining employment after leaving the program.

9. **Other comments:**
   - Students with disciplinary problems attend an alternative school.

Portsmouth
Conversation with Joe Watson, Coordinator of Adult Education
December 1997

1. **Do you have a program similar to the Employment Plus Program (i.e., overage students, GED or other alternative to the diploma program, students counted in ADM)?**
   - The Excel Program is an alternative education program for students who are under twenty years and over sixteen years of age.
   - A GED Preparation program or high school credit program is available to students.

2. **Where is the program located?**
   - Wilson High School

3. **How long has the program been in operation?**
   - The program is in its third year.

4. **Does the program include a cooperative work component?**
   - A work component is not required; a marketing teacher has tried to provide a modified program, and a few students have obtained jobs.

5. **How is the instructional day organized?**
   - Students attend Monday through Thursday. Morning and evening classes are offered, and students may attend classes in either session.

6. **How are students selected?**
   - Any student who is overage and at risk for dropping out of the regular program who meets the age criteria is referred to the program.
   - Students with discipline problems attend a separate alternative school.

7. **How many students are enrolled currently? What is the policy regarding entry and exit?**
   - Three hundred students currently are enrolled.
   - Students enter and exit at designated times.

8. **What is the success rate of the program?**
   - No data is available on the success of the program.

9. **Other comments:**
   - Transportation is not provided to the program.
   - There is no vocational component.

Hampton
Conversation with Johnny Pauls, Regional Director of Secondary Instruction
November 1997

1. **Do you have a program similar to the Employment Plus Program (i.e., overage students, GED or other alternative to the diploma program, students counted in ADM)? How long has the program been in operation?**
   - Hampton began a program this fall for students 17 years of age and two years behind.
   - Some students obtain a GED certificate; others who do not have the skills to obtain a GED certificate work solely on job readiness skills and receive a certificate of completion.

2. **Where is the program located?**
   - Students attend an alternative site.

3. **How long has the program been in operation?**
   - The program began this school year.

4. **Does the program include a cooperative work component?**
   - All students participate in some form of job readiness preparation and cooperative work experience. Transportation to the cooperative placement is the responsibility of the student. The goal is to have every student placed in a good job at the end of the program (e.g., Newport News Shipyard, Canon).

- An outside agency is responsible for job readiness and job placement; job coaches work with students. Part-time instructors teach GED Preparation three hours, four days per week.

5. **How is the instructional day organized?**
   - Flexible scheduling is available. Some students attend GED preparation or job readiness from 9 - 12 a.m. while others attend from 4 - 7 p.m. As students enter cooperative work experience, job readiness training within the program is reduced. For instance, the training may decrease from every day to once a week.

6. **How are students selected?**
   - Students must be 17 years of age and two years behind their age peers. Each of the four high schools has 25 slots. Students are identified through the counseling program as students making slow academic process and/or as school disrupters.
   - Counseling with parents is provided before placement in the program.
   - Several instances of forced placement have occurred with particularly disruptive students.

7. **How many students are enrolled currently? What is the policy regarding entry and exit?**
   - Sixty students were initially enrolled in the program for this school year.
   - Open entry is practiced (students may enter at the beginning of the second grading period, and the 100 slots are close to being filled).
   - Students may exit upon completion of the GED program, but continued enrollment is recommended to ensure job placement.

8. **What is the success rate of the program?**
   - Hampton's program began this school year; achievement data is not available yet.

9. **Other comments:**
   - Students do not return to the home schools.

Newport News
Conversation with Florence Diggs who works for Barbara Jones, Director of Administrative and Alternative Services
December 1997

1. **Do you have a program similar to the Employment Plus Program (i.e., overage students, GED or other alternative to the diploma program, students counted in ADM)?**
   - Newport News has two programs which offer GED Preparation, the Community Center program and Jackson Academy (an alternative school).

2. **Where is the program located?**
   - Both programs are offsite programs.

3. **How long has the program been in operation?**
   - The program at the community center is in its first year.
   - Jackson Academy is in its third year.

4. **Does the program include a cooperative work component?**
   - The emphasis is largely on job-seeking skills. Students visit work sites.

5. **How is the instructional day organized?**
   - GED Preparation and pre-employability skills training is offered in both day and evening programs.

6. **How are students selected?**
   - The Guidance Department in each high school identifies students with attendance problems and students who are at-risk academically.
   - Some pretesting is done before students enroll.

7. **How many students are enrolled currently? What is the policy regarding entry and exit?**
   - About 40 students are currently enrolled at Jackson Academy.

8. **What is the success rate of the program?**
   - Most students complete the GED programs.

9. **Other comments:**

Suffolk
Conversation with Milton Liverman, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
November 1997

1. **Do you have a program similar to the Employment Plus Program (i.e., overage students, GED or other alternative to the diploma program, students counted in ADM)?**
   - Suffolk has a program in cooperation with Isle of Wight called ACE for students 17 years of age or older who are two years behind their age peers, who have five or fewer credits, or who have not passed the Literacy Passport Test.

2. **Where is the program located?**
   - The ACE program is located at the Vocational Technical Center which the two school divisions share.

3. **How long has the program been in operation?**
   - The program is in its third year.

4. **Does the program include a cooperative work component?**
   - Cooperative work placement is a goal of the program, but there has been difficulty finding employers who will hire at-risk students. Many of these students are school disrupters.

5. **How is the instructional day organized?**
   - Students spend half of their day in GED Preparation and half in a vocational program. A vocational assessment is conducted to identify appropriate training.

6. **How are students selected?**
   - Referrals are made by teachers and court services. Parents request student placements. Some dropouts have been recruited for reentry.
   - A GED placement test is administered once students are enrolled. The goal is for all enrollees to obtain a GED regardless of their GED placement test scores.

7. **How many students are enrolled currently? What is the policy regarding entry and exit?**
   - Forty students from Suffolk's two high schools are currently enrolled.
   - Students may enter the program throughout the year.

8. **What is the success rate of the program?**
   - ACE is designed to be a two-year program. It is expected that a group of students will obtain their GED's this year.

9. **Other comments:**
   - It has been difficult to keep students engaged in the program.

Henrico
Conversation with Kozette McIntire, Drop-Out Prevention Coordinator
November 1997

1. **Do you have a program similar to the Employment Plus Program (i.e., overage students, GED or other alternative to the diploma program, students counted in ADM)?**
   - Project YES serves students who are seventeen years of age and behind their age peers. Students receive GED preparation.

2. **Where is the program located?**
   - Project YES is located offsite and connected with the Technical Center.

3. **How long has the program been in operation?**
   - The program has been in operation for approximately six years.

4. **Does the program include a cooperative work component?**
   - This is a requirement.

5. **How is the instructional day organized?**
   - Students attend the program in morning and evening shifts.

6. **How are students selected?**
   - Students are referred from the guidance departments of the high schools; parents, students, and teachers may request the program through the guidance department.
   - A minimum score on the GED Pretest is required; students who do not score the minimum are referred to other programs such as special education programs.

7. **How many students are enrolled currently? What is the policy regarding entry and exit?**
   - Approximately 40 students are enrolled.
   - An open entry and exit policy is practiced to the extent possible.

8. **What is the success rate of the program?**
   - The program has been successful is helping students obtain their GED Certificates.

9. **Other comments:**
   - The most important component of the program is the staff. They must be flexible in their approach to working with at-risk groups.
   - The student/teacher ratio in the program is small--typically 12:1.

Chesterfield
Conversation with Dr. Cynthia Henshaw, Director of Alternative Education
December 1997

1. **Do you have a program similar to the Employment Plus Program (i.e., overage students, GED or other alternative to the diploma program, students counted in ADM)?**
   - Chesterfield has the Regional GED program which provides preparation for the GED examination for overage students.

2. **Where is the program located?**
   - The program is located in one of the high schools. All students in the division go to one site.

3. **How long has the program been in operation?**
   - The program is in its third year.

4. **Does the program include a cooperative work component?**
   - There is a job component to the program, but it is not a requirement. Students find their own employment and must provide their own transportation.

5. **How is the instructional day organized?**
   - Students attend GED Preparation classes during the day, working after school if they have jobs.

6. **How are students selected?**
   - Students are referred from the high schools.
   - Alternative education specialists assist in identifying overage students.
   - Students who have not passed the Literacy Passport Test are not eligible since the program does not offer basic literacy instruction.
   - Students must score a minimum on the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to demonstrate potential for obtaining the GED Certificate.

7. **How many students are enrolled currently? What is the policy regarding entry and exit?**
   - Eighteen students currently enrolled. The program served approximately 47 students last year.
   - Students may enter at any time and exit when they pass the GED examination.

8. **What is the success rate of the program?**
   - Success rate has been high. Students have obtained their GED Certificates.

9. **Other comments:**
   - Computer-assisted instruction is available to students.
   - The main goal is to assist students in getting the GED.

Course Description: This three-period, weighted course provides for orientation to the challenges of engineering careers. Students are actively involved with high tech devices (CAD and CAM), engineering graphics, and math/scientific principles through problem solving experiences. Activities are also provided in descriptive geometry, materials science, and technical systems. Students form engineering teams and select a group design project. Each team utilizes research and development skills to solve engineering problems. Students communicate information through seminars, technical reports, and computers.

Vocational Education (Special Needs)

Title: **Education for Employment I**
Computer Number: *913 or **914
Credit: *1 Unit or
**2 Units (requires a cooperative work component also)
Grade Level: 9-12
Prerequisite: **Students must meet program criteria**
Course Description: The Education for Employment Program is designed to provide a practical way for students to acquire marketable skills while attending school. Emphasis is placed on social skills and knowledge gained through work simulation. This program is designed to help the student to prepare for successful employment. Instruction includes developing goals and values important for employment, occupational preparation, and human relations.

Title: **Education for Employment II**
Computer Number: *949 or **948
Credit: *1 Unit or
**2 Units
Grade Level: 9-12
Prerequisite: **Students must meet program criteria**
Course Description: A continuation of EFE I #913 or #914 (with the additional requirement of a cooperative work experience). The student is required to maintain selected employment on a part-time basis for the duration of this program.

Title: **Employment Plus**
Computer Number: 915
Credit: 3 Units
Grade Level: 9-10
Prerequisite: **Students must meet program criteria**
Course Description: The purpose of "Employment Plus" is to provide certain students with an educational option in place of the completion of a traditional high school program. Employment Plus consists of three periods of directly related G.E.D. instruction and job-related skills. During the afternoon the student will be required to be employed for a minimum of 15 hours per week.

Trade and Industrial Education

Title: **Cooperative Technical Education I**
Computer Number: 659
Credit: 1 Unit
Grade Level: 10 or 11
Prerequisite: None
Course Description: This is a course designed for student career exploration in the areas of trade and industrial occupations, job seeking skills, basic economics and human relations.

Title: **Cooperative Technical Education II**
Computer Number: 660
Credit: 2 Units
Grade Level: 11
Prerequisite: **Cooperative Technical Education I**
Course Description: This is a work-study program designed to train students interested in trade, technical, and skilled industrialemployment. A wide variety of skilled trades and industrial occupations is available. Students are paid for their work and receive two units of credit for graduation. In an CTE class, students study materials that directly relate to their chosen occupation and other employment-related materials.

Title: **Cooperative Technical Education III**
Computer Number: 661
Credit: 2 Units
Grade Level: 12
Prerequisite: **Cooperative Technical Education II**
Course Description: This course is a continuation of Cooperative Technical Education II.

CHESAPEAKE CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

COURSES AND COURSE NUMBERS:

COURSE #	COURSE NAME
826	COMPUTER NETWORK ADMINISTRATION
825	LEGAL SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY
809	MEDICAL SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY
817	MULTIMEDIA AND THE INTERNET
849	HEALTH CARE TECHNOLOGY
830	PRACTICAL NURSING I
830	PRACTICAL NURSING II
807	AIR CONDITIONING AND REFRIGERATION I
818	AIR CONDITIONING AND REFRIGERATION II
824	AUTOMOTIVE PAINTING
822	COLLISION REPAIR TECHNOLOGY
802	AUTOMOTIVE SPECIALIST
804	AUTOMOTIVE TECHNICIAN
800	BRICKLAYING
811	MASONRY
805	INTRODUCTION TO MASONRY
801	CABINETMAKING
812	ADVANCED CABINETMAKING
808	COSMETOLOGY I
810	COSMETOLOGY II
803	ELECTRONICS
827	COMPUTER REPAIR TECHNOLOGY
820	LANDSCAPE DESIGN & MANAGEMENT
840	RADIO COMMUNICATION I
841	RADIO COMMUNICATION II
842	TELEVISION COMMUNICATIONS I
843	TELEVISION COMMUNICATIONS II
806	WELDING I
816	WELDING II
855, 856	ENGINEERING
348	PHYSICS FOR TECHNOLOGY

Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology

Admission and Registration

The programs at the Center are available to students in Chesapeake's secondary schools. Students wishing to attend the Center should obtain an application from their home school and submit it to their counselor. All applications are reviewed by a committee comprised of representatives from the Center and all of the high schools.

Credits and Attendance

One, two, and three-credit programs are available at the Center. Students who complete two-year sequences or certain one-year completer courses may substitute them for one unit of mathematics or science for the twenty-one credit diploma. Good attendance is critical since much of the work is hands on and can not be made up if a student is absent.

College Credit

A special articulation agreement exists between Tidewater Community College and the Chesapeake Public Schools that helps students make a smooth transition from high school to college. After enrolling in Tidewater Community College and meeting certain eligibility requirements, students receive college credit for certain technical-professional courses successfully completed at the Center for Science and Technology.

The following programs at the Center are included in the articulation agreement:
Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Automotive Technology, Computer Network Administration, Electronics, Engineering, Landscape Design and Management, Legal Systems Technology, Medical Systems Technology, Multimedia and the Internet, Physics for Technology, and Welding.

Students should see their vocational counselor for additional information.

Transportation

Students enrolled in the Center will be provided transportation to and from their home schools.

Industrial Cooperative Technical Program

The Industrial Cooperative Technical Program (ICTP) offers Chesapeake Center for Science and Technology students the opportunity to receive valuable training in one of many career fields within the areas of trade, industrial, technical or health occupations. The program involves a combination of training resources of both the industrial complex of the community and the Center.

Business, industrial, and professional establishments provide part-time employment and supervised training of ICTP students during school hours while the Center furnishes the technical subject matter and entry-level skills related to the student's occupation and a coordinator for the program.

The purpose of the program is to provide students with on-the-job occupational experiences that further develop the skills received at the Center. The program exists also to provide employers with skilled workers who have been carefully selected and chosen for program participation and who will complement the employer's work force.

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APPENDIX 3

STUDENT COMMENTS

Senior High School #1

(No comments)

Senior High School #2

Before coming into this class, school wasn't a part of my life. Now, I love to come. It's a great experience. It gives people who have had health problems in the past and were unable to fulfill their dream of graduating, actually accomplishing something.

I think this GED program is a wonderful alternative for those who cannot graduate on time with a regular diploma. It's giving the unfortunate people a chance. This program isn't just for students with a history of discipline problems or other trouble makers; it's also for those students who have had a hint of bad luck and need a second chance. This program teaches excellence just like regular school courses offer.

Senior High School #3

Students in Employment Plus can get in Driver's Ed to help them get their licenses.

Senior High School #4

Driver's Education is needed.

Driver's Education, more computer skills, and more help from the principal are needed.

Driver's Education is needed.

I think the program is a good program. It gives me a good responsibility to leave school early and go to work. It makes you think how and why. It kind of teaches you to be a better person, letting you know you didn't let yourself down, you didn't just drop out of school, you are still in school trying for just getting your GED.

There should be a basic curriculum and certain standards to be met at different points in the year to ensure a good all around development of mental skills that is monitored from outside the program itself.

Senior High School #5

This Employment Plus Program has helped me a lot; if it weren't for this, I wouldn't be where I am today or doing what I am today.

Senior High School #6

I think they should let more people in the class because if they did then a lot of students wouldn't drop out. If it wasn't for the class, I would have been a high school drop out. By the way, our teacher is a very good teacher.

I think you only should have to get 200 because you only have to get 225 to pass the test.

Play all sports, along with other students. Not being looked at by administrators as outcasts.

In the GED program we can't play sports for the school. I don't think that is right. People in the GED program have great talent, and I think that they should be able to play sports. If we can take part with things dealing with the school, why not sports?